No subject

EIGHT SERMONS
BY DANIEL MERRIMAN

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TO THE PEOPLE OF BROADWAY CHURCH
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CENTRAL CHURCH
WORCESTER MASSACHUSETTS

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DIVINE GUIDANCE

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DIVINE GUIDANCE

PROVERBS III: 6. *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths*

MAN is a very dependent and yet a very kingly being. He is not a creator of materials but a manager of forces. He cannot make the wind, but he can set his sail. He cannot bring a drop of water from the clouds, but he can place his bucket for that which falls. He cannot see his way, but he can take the hand of One who does see it. This is the precious truth contained in this verse. For in here, upon a certain condition, is a promise of guidance; and guidance in one form or another is one of our chief needs, is it not? To be assured in times of doubt and anxiety, when a sense of our blindness and limitation possesses us, that there is a God above, who has light and help for us if we will have them, — this is priceless comfort.

But this is the simple fact which is stated in this old proverb, — acknowledge God, and He will guide you. This acknowledgment contains several elements, not perhaps altogether distinct, yet sufficiently so to be specified.

1. The first is a practical confession of God's being and attributes. I say a practical confession, for to confess God theoretically is no acknowledgment of Him. To many minds, in these days, the idea of God is very hazy — very remote; a sort of far-off and misty notion which one may believe in or not, and it makes little difference. For causes which it would be easy to point out, many men now confess God's existence very much as they confess the existence of the most distant planet: not because they have any experimental knowledge of Him; not because they have even felt Him touching them; but because such a being is described in the books. God is not a personal reality to them. His kingdom and His will enter not into their plan or estimate of things any more than do the empire and motions of the fixed stars.

But the acknowledgment of which I am speaking means an actual confession by hand and tongue in the common acts of every-day life that God is a real Person, right here, who has created and upholds us, to whom we owe our supreme service, and whose law, revealed in His word and in our own hearts, is the high rule of our man-

hood, forever binding on us in the smallest detail of daily thinking and living. Thus to recognize God, not in a general, indefinite way, as we recognize the truths of astronomy, but to know Him as a friend; to confess Him as the preëminent fact of our life, in bargaining, schooling, voting, building, spending; in work and play, in sorrow and joy, — this is one element of acknowledging Him in all our ways.

I know a rebellious son who has a wise and godly father. The son is away from home. You ask him if his father is living, and he replies, Yes, he supposes so. He thinks it probable that there is such a person. But in his daily business and pleasure that son makes no more account of that father than he does of the King of Siam. Into the life of the son the father's being and principles, his person and his wishes, do not enter as a power. So do men often regard God. He "is not in all their thoughts." They may not appear to hate Him, they simply forget and ignore Him.

2. Obedience is a second element involved in acknowledging God. Let us observe that this somewhat unpopular word, obedience, has a very

clear meaning. It does not signify talent or culture, it is not thought or sentiment; indeed, primarily it has nothing to do with either intellect or feeling, but solely with the will,—the choosing, purposing attribute of man's complex being.

Observe also that God is not only our Father but our Ruler; that He has laws; that therefore to submit ourselves to these laws is an essential element in acknowledging Him. Obedience is everywhere the test of loyalty. Laws are a necessary characteristic of all governing powers, and one cannot be said to acknowledge the power, nor can he rightfully claim its protection or guidance, unless he cheerfully obeys these laws. If, as a citizen of this nation, you demand its assistance at home or abroad, that demand has no force whatever, except as you are supposed to give your full allegiance to the nation and yield yourself to its ordinances.

Now the law of God is exceeding broad, and extends to every act and over all the thoughts and intents of the heart. It has to do with so trivial a thing as buying a paper of pins, and with so great a work as the redemption of a soul. Go where

we will, we cannot escape its sanctions. It is a part of our very being. Its voice is heard when we go forth in the morning; when we stand in the busy market, or shop, or school at noon; and when we lie down at night. It is written on the pages of our Bibles and affirmed in our own consciences. Now to exalt this law as the supreme principle to which we will subordinate the whole round of our daily activity and ambition,—our business, friendship, pleasure, wishes, plans,—this it is to acknowledge God in all our ways. Oh, in this tempting world and with these easily tempted hearts of ours, it takes steadfast resolution to do this; but he that does it will have guidance from a hand above himself.

Have you ever seen a lad standing among a group of his mates who were enticing him to some pleasure, alluring to his soul, but which his mother had forbidden him? "Come, now, don't be a baby," they say; "she is out of sight and will never know anything about it." Then comes a struggle for the boy: a conflict of spirit which shows itself in pale face and rigid body. But in spite of his tempters, he obeys his mother's com-

mand and thus acknowledges her. In the face of scorners he honors her; he owns her authority; he yields to her command as most sacred; he accepts her rule as best. It is a small thing, but does it not make you think well of the boy? Do you not say that he is likely to receive guidance when life's greater emergencies shall come upon him?

So it is that by obedience to God's law, not simply when the course of life is smooth, but also when fierce temptations assail, so it is that we acknowledge Him. To obey in the little things of life that God to whom nothing is small; to obey also when perhaps obedience costs property, or reputation, or old friendships; to obey the unseen Jehovah and His eternal order when that order may overturn cherished plans, and perhaps compel loss of caste in the world or among the select few whose favor forms a man's earthly heaven; to obey the Highest when the soul, perhaps bereft of others' sympathy and exposed to others' contempt, is left alone clinging only to naked duty, —this is to acknowledge God, and the soul that does it shall have His guidance.

3. A third element involved in acknowledging

God is *trust* in Him. It is very hard for us to put much confidence in that which we cannot see or touch, and sometimes it seems to be getting harder every day. It is very difficult for us to believe in that promise for whose fulfilment we have long to wait. The return for self-indulgence is immediate; that for self-denial often remote. Dishonesty often brings sudden riches and slow ruin; honesty implies present hardship and distant reward. Hence we become limited by the present, and it tyrannizes over us. The world is here now, and investments in it pay speedy profits. God is far off, and His dividends are slow. Thus unconsciously we reason, and so we trust this world and acknowledge it, instead of God. In all our ways, how the earth binds us with its attractiveness and ever fleeting promises, until we begin to look upon it as our perpetual home, and upon death as an unmannerly intruder, who has no right to touch us with his chill hand!

Now, to break this thraldom of sense, even though we may be bound therein with threefold shining cords; to trust God, remembering daily that we have here no continuing city, but that

we seek one to come; to take the whole of this world, move in it, and use it cheerfully and honestly; to esteem this life for exactly the great good that it is; to have no sentimental and unhealthy contempt for it, yet no implicit affiance in it; in short, to be in the world yet not of but beyond it, and to believe in the Highest, — this, too, it is to acknowledge Him.

Such trust is a very rare, a very precious inheritance of the soul. It seems to be the echo of the voice of God in the heart of man. Yet it can be cultivated. When it overcomes great obstacles it becomes itself great, and is the key that unlocks secrets into which the mere intellect cannot penetrate; for a great metaphysician was not far wrong when he called such trust the organ of knowledge.

I have thus mentioned three general elements in a practical acknowledgment of God, — to confess Him, to obey Him, to trust Him, — all which may be regarded as only different aspects of the same thing.

But you will observe that the text exhorts that this acknowledgment of God be made in all our

ways. Not merely on the Lord's Day or at church; not once a month or once a year; not as a matter of form; but in all that we do, and think, and are. It is a ceaseless confession, and obedience, and trust, which, like the current of a river, moves on continuously and without which the river would not be. Think how numberless our words, our footsteps, our thoughts, in a single day; how infinite the acts and wishes which make up our life, and then remember that our truest acknowledgment of God must be made in these. Through these it is, more than through our formal acts of worship, that a habit of mind is formed by which God and His law become positive forces of the soul, shaping the whole conduct. The man walks with God, and hence guidance comes to him as a matter of course. He thinks God's thoughts and wills God's will, and so with God's light he sees around him and ahead.

Now, there are two or three ways, each sufficiently distinct from the others to be specified, in which we feel the need of God's guidance, and in which we may in a peculiar manner expect it, if we truly acknowledge Him.

1. One is in the decision of those somewhat minor questions of personal habits or personal conduct, the moral quality of which is not absolutely fixed, but depends largely upon the individual's circumstances and relations to society. Such, for example, are the questions: How much shall one spend in dress and amusement? What part of his income shall one give in charity? What reading shall be allowed on the Lord's Day? Shall one under any circumstances go to the theatre or indulge in such things as cards or dancing? The decision of such questions is sometimes very clear indeed, but often very puzzling and delicate, owing to the widely different surroundings in the midst of which men are placed, and their varied temperaments and education. The laying down of exact rules under which *all* such inquiries shall be decided alike, and for all men, inflexibly, without regard to circumstances, would be impossible, or at least unwise and inexpedient, and yet there is a right way to be found for every person in every such case.

It is proper that such questions be broadly discussed in the pulpit, the papers, and conversation.

We should search the Scriptures and science. We should make use of the experience and example of the wise and good. We should seek to have men base their decision in any single case upon general principles which are well established. But if, after all this, you are unsettled and go to some Christian friend or pastor, for example, and ask him how you shall decide in some one of these ten thousand cases which are daily coming up, and upon which good men differ in opinion, he will be apt, if he is a sensible man, to give you just this proverb, — "In all thy ways acknowledge God, and He shall direct thy paths."

Of course such a friend or pastor may give you helpful advice, yet his main office is not to bid you decide such questions by rule, but to teach you to refer them to deep principles, and then to preach to you these principles with all his might as the great laws of your being which you disobey at your peril. We should not desire to be children or slaves, but Christian freemen, and able to know and obey the truth which makes free. We should not wish to live, or lead others to live, by an arbitrary rule, but by allegiance to the living

God. Therefore get all the information you can, but before you decide any such problem over which you are puzzled, even the smallest, stop and in the secret stillness of your own soul acknowledge God. Confess, obey, and trust Him for the future as your Father, and then He will guide you; it may be by some slight indication of outward providence, or it may be by some monition of conscience as delicate as the shadow of a flying bird on the greensward.

Beware that you do not resist such guidance, though it be slight as a thread of gossamer. Be clean in thought, be sound in feeling, but cherish and study the secret monitions of a healthy conscience. Be careful lest when you think you are acknowledging God, you acknowledge only the world's opinion, or your own sinful inclination; lest you take money, or fame, or fashion, or even friendship for your God; for if you deceive yourself here, in the decision of one of even these small cases, you will surely loosen a little your hold on the hand of your Heavenly Father.

The wedge which finally has cleft asunder the bonds which have held many a young man to the

Highest has often had its earliest driving in the wrong decision of some of these apparently trifling questions. And on the other hand, in the heat and pain of settling one of them aright has been found the prime secret of many a godly and well-guided life. Right choices are the eyes of the soul. Through them enters the guiding light from God and the better life.

2. A second occasion upon which we may expect God's guidance if we acknowledge Him is in the decision of those great radical questions which occur comparatively seldom in a lifetime, and on which our whole usefulness and happiness seem to hinge.

It is not, indeed, possible for us to say what are the great questions, but there come to us sometimes moments of decision on which the whole volume and scope of our life seem to hang. Such, for example, is the question whether one shall go to college or not; the question as to one's calling in life; the question of marriage; the question whether one shall change one's abode. In respect to these and similar issues, life is not laid out in squares or parallel lines for any of us. There is

no set of ordinances as rigid as the track of a railway along which a man can be pushed. There are abundant principles, but each individual must apply them to his own case. Such questions it may not greatly puzzle some men to decide. They may be willing to let their way be shaped without their own effort. But for a brave, free, ambitious man, who feels that he was born for some purpose, it will not be enough to slide into the lazy current of everybody's opinion, and be drawn along and whirled about in the eddies made by others' hands.

Each one of us has a life to shape, and woe be to the man who trifles with it. We must stand up at these sharp turns and make our election for the most part alone. Not otherwise are the finest characters shaped. It is part of the penalty of our freedom that *we* must decide. He who has not known some of the bitter experience of these crises to which the most serious results seem linked, and over which the soul struggles, is either poorly stocked with individuality, or has not found out half of life's amazing secret.

Every source of human wisdom is sought, per-

haps only to add to the feeling of distraction and responsibility. We seek friendly advice and sympathy, and exhaust them. At length, like the patriarch Jacob at the brook, we put aside all companionship, and stand alone. A sense of our sins then comes trooping upon us; we wrestle for light and help from a hand mightier than our own. At such times there is an inexpressible sweetness in such a word as this: "In all Thy ways acknowledge God, and He shall direct thy paths." It is good, then, to kneel down in the awful Presence, and letting Him, in whose hand are all things, search you, to acknowledge, by confession, obedience, trust, Him only. Then, hearing His voice say: "This is the way, walk ye in it," to rise up and go forward calmly and fearlessly.

The intimations of the way may not seem very clear. There may be no audible voice, no open vision; yet the man who acts in the spirit of this acknowledgment will receive guidance, though he may scarcely know how.

But remember that such acknowledgment is not an easy thing; that it must be thorough and real. It was thus that our Lord, before beginning

His ministry, retired into the wilderness, that in its solitudes he might find out Himself; might see the real issues of His life, and triumph in them. It was thus that later, in the garden, He bade His disciples, Peter, James, and John, tarry while he withdrew from them, and in agony knelt down and prayed: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." And do you not remember that from that bloody wrestling Jesus arose with such a confident bearing, and with such a light on His brow, that those who came to take Him fell back in terror? He knew His way because of His submission. If you would have His confidence, study His prayer, that you may understand His acknowledgment of God.

3. A third case in which we may expect God's guidance, if we acknowledge Him, is in the understanding of Christian doctrine; and I mean by this, not only the truth of the Gospel, but also that truth as related to those theories of science and philosophy which are having such a wide influence now, and which bear so vitally upon the great questions of the eternal life.

Indeed, this case may be said to include the other two upon which I have dwelt, as the great tidal wave of the sea uplifts and bears along with it all the billows. For if we know the truth of the Gospel, and the truth of the Gospel as it stands related to all truth and error, then we are without excuse if we do not obey it. And if we do obey it, the subordinate questions of life will almost settle themselves. For the vital Christian, living in union with God, has the interpreter of all truth in its spiritual bearings within him. That is to say, spiritual truth is known by him who is willing to obey it. The holy heart tends to make the clear head. Obedience to the truth which is present and known is the key which unlocks that which is unknown. Begin walking in so much of the way as you can see and you shall see more, for it is the path of the just that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Is it the path of the scientific man merely? No, for God and God's truth must be experienced to be known. Is it the path of the educated man solely? No, for culture can never take the place of obedience as the organ of divine knowledge.

Is it the path of the man of genius alone? No, for it is only those who become as little children who enter into the open secret of the Heavenly Kingdom. No, it is not the path of any of these as such, but it is the path of the *just* that, as the Hebrew reads, shineth and shineth unto the perfect day of the vision of God.

The just man is the confessing, the obedient, the trustful man, and he is the man who has guidance. I do not say that he has the most knowledge or judgment of earthly things, — that is not the point here. But I tell you what he will have: in times of doubt he will have light, for he has the real condition of light within him, namely, affiance with God. It is sin which obstructs the *visio Dei*.

My friends, if any of you are in religious darkness to-day, — I say it with all tenderness, I say it with Scripture and the constitution of your own being on my side, — it is chiefly your own fault. If any of you are in painful doubt about the being of God, the destiny of the soul, the doctrines of the Cross to-day, I say, Christian experience bearing me witness, it is more a trouble of the heart

than of the head. I know well enough that there are mysteries about the divine nature, about man's relation to God, about the hereafter, which, when the intellect alone takes them up, remain only painfully insoluble. I know that any man, Christian or unbeliever, can make himself miserable over these, if he toils at them simply as problems of the head. Yet I know, too, that no man ever sought earnestly to know God as a friend and redeemer by the heart as well as the head, and sought in vain.

And so I say, with all affection, yet with all distinctness, if any of you fail to find God as your Father and Saviour, it is because of your disobedience; for Jesus Himself has said that if any man will do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine. Who is there in this congregation who does not already perceive more of God's truth than he confesses; more of God's law than he obeys; more of God's promises than he trusts; and therefore does it become any one of us to complain that the way of salvation is mysterious, when we do not practically accept so much of the way as we know?

Here, then, I sum up the whole lesson of this hour: Acknowledge the Highest, and the Highest shall be your guide.

Would you know what duty is respecting some practical matter of business or amusement which you meditate for to-morrow? Would you have guidance for some great decision involving a life's usefulness and happiness, where sharp questions press painfully upon you? Would you know, O hesitating, perplexed, doubtful souls, the way to Jesus and eternal life? Confess, obey, trust the truth, the commands, the divine drawings you have *now*, and though there may remain many unsolved problems, and the way may seem at times dark, you shall not fear, for you shall not walk alone, but God shall direct your paths.

A few years ago I stood with some friends on the deck of a steamer which was trying to make a difficult port on a rocky coast. The sea was chopped and angry. Now and then a heavy wave would throw its spray over our deck. On every side a thick fog settled down, allowing us to see hardly a ship's length ahead. The engine kept toiling away and we were making steady prog-

ress, but where was the guidance, the direction? I looked, and there in his little house stood the man at the wheel. A few passengers were cowering from the water-laden wind close beside him, but he heeded them not. Grasping the spokes with both hands, he eagerly watched the palpitating cardboard in the compass-box. As it trembled this way and that, he turned the wheel with firm and ready hand. Apparently he could see no further than I. And yet he could; he knew his bearings; he confessed, obeyed, trusted the needle's delicate monitions. The great ship cleared the waves. The mysterious vapor opened to the right and left. The misty curtains that shrouded the wished-for headlands rolled up as fast as we went on, and soon we were safe. I turned away with overflowing heart, and this text came to my mind with deep comfort: "In all thy ways acknowledge God, and He shall direct thy paths."

Oh, yes, there are deep unknown things in religion, in life, in death. The voyage we make, the harbor towards which we sail, seem often wrapped in chilling fogs and shadows. Yet God has not left us without a witness, a compass. His

word, His Spirit, and the conscience within us responding to both, are enough. Oh, my beloved friends, they *are* enough, for you and for me. Follow them. Acknowledge the God who gives them, and you shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

FIRE IN THE CENSER

THIS AND THE FOLLOWING FIVE SERMONS
WERE PREACHED IN WORCESTER

FIRE IN THE CENSER

NUMBERS XVI: 46. *Take thy censer, and put fire therein from off the altar*

LET us attend for a moment to the story of which these words form a part. While the children of Israel were passing through the Wilderness, a rebellion broke out among them. Some of the tribe of Levi and of Reuben, jealous of the authority of Moses and Aaron, formed a conspiracy under the lead of Korah to overthrow them and secure command. A decisive test of their claims was instituted and applied by Moses. The rebels lost their cause, and were overwhelmed by a swift and terrible destruction. Some were engulfed by an earthquake and some were consumed by fire; and to this day the names of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram remain a warning to all ambitious plotters against rightful authority.

But this crushing blow did not destroy all the seeds of revolt. We read that "on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord." Against

this rebellious spirit the Lord's anger was kindled, and He said to Moses, "Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." The position of affairs now became extremely critical: Moses and Aaron on one side, and a mutinous, headstrong people, against whom sentence of death had gone forth, on the other. It was a position such as has often been seen since, when a few brave men have had to confront an angry mob whom it was far easier to destroy than to save. What was to be done?

"And Moses said unto Aaron, Take thy censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and lay incense thereon, and carry it quickly unto the congregation, and make atonement for them; for there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun."

So much for the story. Leaving it at this point for the present, let us see if we cannot find a deep truth set forth by this simple act of Aaron.

The symbols of great principles are always changing; the principles themselves are forever the same. Without attempting to explain fully the

meaning of Jewish rites and ceremonies, we may say in general that the censer and its incense, on the one hand, represent man and his resources; and the fire from off the altar, on the other hand, represents the Divine Spirit. In this one act of Aaron, man and God are brought together. In the combination of these two is to be found the secret not only of the atonement made here by Aaron, but of that made by Christ, and also of all that power which secures moral achievement and progress among men. Here, then, is the truth which this ancient story of the Wilderness has to tell us: man and his gifts, touched with the life of God, become a power unto salvation.

So far as man is concerned, the chief secret of power is found always in the skilful adjustment of elements which lie at his hand. He can create nothing; he can only combine. His ship will make the voyage if he trims her sails to the wind. He must adapt his engine to the steam before it will turn his looms or hammer his iron. Always his task is simply adjustment. Separated, the three ingredients of gunpowder are inert; combined in certain orderly proportions, they contain enormous

force; add one spark to the combination, and that force is set loose, rending the rocks asunder.

What is thus true in mechanics and chemistry is equally true in political economy, art, and religion, only in these, as the elements are more subtile, the combination is more difficult. To wealth must be added good judgment, taste, and the spiritual flame of benevolence in the possessor, or his wealth is scarcely of more value to him or to society than it would be if buried in the heart of the earth. With great learning must be combined common sense and the divine touch of sympathy and love, or the learned man has but slender influence over his fellows. To the finest materials of art, and to the noblest opportunity, we must bring the genius of the great artist, or the building, statue, and painting are feeble and commonplace. To man, and to all that he has in every department of his activity, there must come somehow fire from off the altar of God, or there can be no beauty, no true strength, no sound religion, no powers of life eternal.

The world of man is to-day full as never before of the most varied and ample instrumentalities.

Man himself is a more perfectly disciplined instrument than ever before. These are the censers and their incense. On the other hand, there is the Spirit of the Almighty, which giveth men understanding, ever ready to kindle these censers with their incense into a flame. We are to-day living in the dispensation of the Spirit. As Christians we say this. We say it in respect to our religion. But is it not also true that the Spirit of the living God is equally the inspiration of all that marvellous discovery and progress in science and material things for which this age is distinguished? That God by His Spirit is nearer the world of man than ever would seem to be more than a fancy; it would seem to be a fact, announced by our Lord in the Gospels, confirmed by reason, testified to by experience. The sacred fire was always kept burning on the altar of incense in the midst of the old Jewish tabernacle. It was the symbol of a reality into the fullness of which we may enter. That reality is the presence of the Divine Spirit among men, ready to kindle them and all their belongings into power.

Now, we want this fire within our censers. We

want human resources set in flame by the divine touch. Without this union there can be no proportion, no harmony, no force. As tons of coal will not turn one spindle without fire, so whole libraries of theology, the most splendid church, the soundest creed, the most eloquent speech, the most perfect organization, cannot lift a single soul an inch towards heaven unless the breath of God be in them.

If now we take the censer of Aaron and its incense as representing the human element of that great whole in which the highest power resides, we may say in general that there are two kinds of censers.

There are, first, all those resources which belong mostly to a world external to man himself. These consist chiefly of wealth, and that which wealth, coupled with industry, good taste, wisdom, and self-restraint supplies. They are the capital, the homes, farms, and factories, the railroads, telegraphs, and machineries, of the land. They are the permanent institutions of the Christian commonwealth, such as the government, with its various agencies; the schools and colleges, with

their books and apparatus; the treasures of art; the hospitals; the churches, with their organization, traditions, and incentives,—in short, all the endowments and tools of civilization. Never was there an age so rich in these; never were they so flexible to human uses. There is scarcely one of them—the simplest or the most complicated, the most material or the most refined—which cannot be made subservient to spiritual ends; which cannot be kindled by a spark from off the altar into the flame of a divine utility.

We sometimes hear doleful complaints that this is a material age. There is now and then an apprehensive disparagement of science and its results, as though they would become hindrances instead of helps. As well might a man disparage the axe with which he chops, or complain of the candlestick which holds his light. The condemnation of material agencies is a confession of unbelief. It is the sad parable of the man who fails to recognize the Divine Spirit. It is as though Aaron had despised his censer. Man has nothing which God cannot subdue and employ. Even the cruel artillery of war may become the arrows of the

Almighty, and the great armaments under which the nations groan, may prove the assurances of their peace.

Once admit that the Spirit of God can make the hard, sinful heart of man His dwelling-place, and then He can use all things of man. The hut of an idolater, and roofs of gold, and walls inlaid with precious stones, may alike become Bethels. Christianity can go forth, as in the case of the Apostles, in the shoes and with the staff of a pilgrim; yet even the flying car, and steamers fleet as the wings of the morning, and telegraphs that in a second put a girdle round the earth, are not swift enough for her. She can transcribe her holy writings painfully, letter by letter, in the cells and with the pens of monks, yet she can make facile use of the most rapid printing-presses.

Let us not be afraid of science or of material progress. They are fitting themselves for the Spirit of God. They shall become the vehicles of His changeless mercies in that day when even on the bells of the horses shall be written Holiness unto the Lord. Not less of man, but more of God; not less of the material, but more of the spiritual. We

want every resource, every appliance, but we want the fire of God in them.

Disproportion is weakness. Maladjustment is a curse. In many a structure which has disastrously fallen, there was material enough, perhaps even too much, but it was not in the right place. The stone or iron of the pile became an instrument of death only because it was not laid or wrought with mind. We sometimes say that men of wide learning are failures. Why? Not because of their learning, but because they have no proportionate spiritual apprehension and enthusiasm. Only when our gifts are ends in themselves, only when out of relation to the Divine Spirit, are they worse than useless. Then they cumber the ground. Then they are weights to sink those who possess them. Then they are broken reeds piercing the hand that leans upon them. Wealth untouched by the divine life becomes a canker. Culture not pervaded by the law of sacrifice becomes corrupt. Even the most sacred institutions, bearing sacred names and set up for sacred purposes, grow to be burdens of death when once the fire of God has left them.

Yet though they are so easily abused, human resources are, in one sense, as important as their divine empowering. Aaron would have been helpless on that day without his censer and incense, even though the sacred fire was burning on the altar. For the divine fire must have something to contain it, something solid to lay hold upon, or it will burn wildly and do harm. Zeal without knowledge or resource may possibly at times seem better than no zeal at all. Religious enthusiasm with no help from established means and institutions may be better than no enthusiasm. But it is apt then to turn into fanaticism ; or to become thin and weak through lack of reasonable support, and its best effects like water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up. Rich and cultured people often dread and withdraw from religious enthusiasm ; and religious enthusiasm shrinks from culture. Christian history is the record of a ceaseless vibration between these two poles. Only at points is there a balance, an adjustment. These are the periods of manifest progress. The lesson is obvious. Whenever and wherever the divine fire burns, let us furnish the censers and the incense that it

may burn the more reasonably and effectively; so that we shall see it manifestly true that:

> "*One accent of the Holy Ghost*
> *The heedless world hath never lost.*"

A comparatively small sum of money, bestowed for three or four years, will educate a young man of religious fervor and multiply his power by making him wiser. You cannot create the fervor, but you may give the money. A few hundred dollars a year will sustain a missionary in a neglected district, saving the religious fire there from running into vagaries, and consolidating and disciplining all good results. You cannot make the missionary. He must be of God, and of God's ordaining; but you may support him. Thus the very mammon of unrighteousness may be transmuted into regenerated souls, into spiritual impulses that shall go on increasing their power to the eternal day.

But so far we have considered the least valuable of our resources, the least important of our censers.

There is a second kind of censer and incense, more essential than any we have spoken of. It is the man himself. Civilization is not merely insti-

tutions, it is men. Christianity is more than mere machinery, however divinely moved. The Holy Spirit has more effective instruments than any endowment or organization can be. The costliest censer which a man can take, and into and upon the incense of which he can put fire from off God's altar, is the life and blood of his own personality. It is the substance and thought and sympathy of his own being. "I beseech you, brethren," says St. Paul, "that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." Why the body? Because it is the outward organ of the invisible spirit. It is the tangible representative of the spiritual self. Every one has this censer. You may not have wealth, or books, or home, but you have yourself: lips to speak, hands to help, a brain to think, a heart to love and sympathize. In these, as in a censer, you can put the divine fire.

We live in an age of machinery, of institutions, of organizations, to which we delegate our work. We have corporations with great factories to weave our cloth, instead of making it ourselves, with our own hands, under our own roofs, as our ancestors did. So we organize societies and various agen-

cies to carry on our educational, philanthropic, and religious work. We bring these as censers, and this is well. The subdivision of labor demands this. But we are slow to offer ourselves. Yet this is what our religion, indeed what the very nature of the sinful human heart requires. The religion of Jesus Christ is intensely personal. It seeks not yours, but you; not your belongings, but yourself. This is the innermost secret of its power. The old religions, Jewish and pagan, and even many modern religions, are religions of places and rites. Ours is a religion of persons. It magnifies the individual and all personal relationships. The fire from off its altar wants not censers of apparatus merely, but of breathing souls and throbbing hearts.

You know well enough the difference between giving money to the destitute and giving yourself in personal care, in nursing the sick, comforting the despairing, guiding the erring. Still better do they know the difference. You must bring this best gift to the altar for lost men; you must touch them with your consecrated self before you will do your utmost to win them.

It is comparatively easy to give money; to plan a mission; to organize a benevolent society; and to ask that the divine fire may kindle them. All this is good and needful, but there is something far richer, a jewel more precious, the giving of which is like the giving of life.

Jesus might have built temples in Judea. He might have sent missionaries to fill them. He might have organized a religion. But then He would not have given Himself to heal loathsome humanity; to feel close to Him its repulsive breath; to experience its heavy burdens daily resting on His weary shoulders; and finally to be crushed to death by the weight and malice of its sins. Doing this, He is able to save to the uttermost. He has thus lifted Himself and His influence far beyond the reach of all change. Until we give ourselves in the same spirit we have not truly been with Jesus and learned of Him. It is this which makes a man a Christian, this which appoints him a minister. Here is the true regeneration, here the genuine ordination.

In this has been the hiding of the power of the Church's great servants and heroes. Not only their goods, but their utmost selves have been

censers and incense, perfectly filled with the divine fire. Such was St. Paul; such Xavier; such the preacher Wesley, the philanthropist Howard, the missionary Martyn, the explorer Livingstone, and hosts of others not less consecrated. The course of civilization has been shaped by men like these. Their spoken words have sometimes had more power than armies and parliaments.

The man of the world sometimes endeavors curiously to study out the secret of such men's power. He philosophizes, and attributes it to this or that accidental cause. The secret of the thing is precisely the same as that of a finely adjusted mechanism, or of a great work of art. It is in the harmony of parts, only on the highest spiritual plane. The secret is in the proportionate union of man with God. It is the story of Aaron's censer over again. The secret is in the fire from off the altar burning within living men, and transfiguring them. It is the secret of Calvary; of Him who said: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." It is the undying power of the life of God within the soul of man, which anybody can have, and which makes Christianity

not a mere institution, not a creed, not an opinion, but deeper, broader, higher than these, a divine service, from generation to generation transmuting all material things to its use, and making the souls of men its deathless instruments.

But we have yet to consider the practical outcome of this union of God and man, of this fire within the censer, in the actual work of redemption, and for this let us turn back for a moment to the story of the text.

You will remember that we left the whole congregation of the children of Israel threatened with destruction from the Lord for their sins. "And Moses said unto Aaron, Take thy censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and lay incense thereon, and carry it quickly unto the congregation, and make atonement for them; for there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun. And Aaron took as Moses spake, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on the incense and made atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed."

Here we have the substantial results of Aaron's service. The world will never outgrow the need of atonement. The same principles exist now that existed in Aaron's day. True, there is no longer the altar of incense with its fire; no longer the brazen censer; no longer the high priest; no longer the plague, so suddenly sent to punish the sins of the people. But everything symbolized by these exists. The principles and the relations between them remain. The fire is the Spirit of the living God. The censer is man and his resources. Every person is, or may be, an Aaron: himself both priest and offering. By these, atonement in a deep sense is to be made for the plague of sin and death, which though it does not seem to fall so swiftly, yet just as truly ravages society now as then.

And what is atonement? Primarily, reconciliation; readjustment of man with God, and hence of man with man. To bring about this reconciliation requires sacrifice, which is only the painful setting right of things that were wrong. Some men say that education and development are enough. They seem to forget that sin is the transgression of law, and that to deliver man from sin,

the broken relationship must be righted again. Whatever does this involves sacrifice; that is, a readjustment, a resubmission to God's will; a bringing of man and the things of man, through sore travail, to a point of harmony with God, where the fire from off the altar shall lighten them. The great and universal formula of this sacrifice is in the words of the God-man in the Scriptures: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." To do it with my wealth and health; to do it with my goods and utmost self; to do it with my cross and death. Whatever its symbol, that is the central truth of the sacrifice which readjusts, which atones.

Here appears the supreme headship of Christ. He alone is the all-sufficient sacrifice for sin, for He alone had a perfect, sinless human nature, wholly filled with God. He represents humanity and answers for it. "It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins." They could only symbolize the true offering. "Wherefore when Christ cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering [in this sense] thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me."

Christ did not stand outside of humanity offering sacrifices of things, but He entered into humanity. He took for His censer His own mortal flesh, and in that and with that He offered Himself. He did the most possible even to Omnipotence, and did it perfectly. Therefore He has a supreme and unchangeable high priesthood. But this is not all. He makes every one who accepts Him, by virtue of that acceptance, also both a priest and an offering. Sharing in Christ, we share in His sacrifice. By our faith, our union with Him, we make our own that readjustment with God which He has gone before us in making.

The truth of the atonement, then, is no dry dogma, nor yet a beautiful "drama in the sky," but the most practical of living experiences. When Christ's spirit dwells within a man he knows what the atonement means, for the Cross then becomes the inmost spring of his own life. He then understands the mystery of its suffering and of its glory. It becomes the sign of his *via vitae*. It is the way along which he takes fire from off the altar for himself, the censer. Christ atones for our sins by putting the principle of His own sacri-

fice within us. We are not saved more by Christ than in Christ. Hence, in whatever terms of theology you state the doctrine of the atonement, this much is sure, the work of Christ is not for us till it is within us.

It is here that we get a glimpse of the real principle that must at last underlie all successful efforts to reform men, and to reconcile men with their highest selves and with God, and classes of men with one another. We seek by social science, by education, by legislation, by the police, to do away with the great plague of sin in the world. We would stand between the dead and the living to make an atonement as Aaron did on that awful day in Israel, but we would do it with charitable organizations and various mechanism. These have their use, but they are not enough. Back of them must be the law of the Cross, leading us in our measure to give ourselves personally for our fellow men as He gave Himself for us. Kindled ourselves, we must kindle others with the divine fire. Not otherwise shall we stay the plague.

There are now two or three thoughts that suggest themselves.

For the first of these I turn back again for a moment to the text. The best translation of it is that of the Revised Version; not, "take a censer," but "take thy censer." In those days there was only one Aaron, and only his well-known censer always lying by the altar of incense. Now, every Christian is a priest, and each one is commanded not to take any censer, but "thy censer;" the peculiar gift or opportunity which God has given him, and putting fire in that, to stand between the dead and the living in Christ's name.

It is here that we are apt to shun responsibility. One that is poor says: If I only had the censer of wealth, I would make an offering. Another who is ignorant: If I only had culture. Another: If I only had the gift of speech, or more time, or health, or social position, then I could help stay the plague of sin.

But God does not ask you to use a censer that is not yours. The command to you is not to take any censer that you would like to have, but "take thy censer:" take that old power, or gift, or station of yours with which you are familiar, which perhaps you have long been selfishly using, and

which is peculiar to yourself. Do not mourn because you have not another. Do not strain after some other man's. It is all you can do to use your own. Take your business; take your home; take your poverty or wealth; take your eloquence, or your stumbling speech; take even your sickness; take yourself, in all your sense of want and weakness, and ask God to touch you with His fire. There is no act so small, no gift so mean, that, filled with the Divine Spirit, may not stand between the dead and the living to make an atonement.

The second practical thought is that the proofs of Christ's religion are in the experience of it. Christianity is not a demonstration but a realization. It is not a theory or an opinion but a service. No man shall ever understand Christ and His priesthood by logic or by feeling alone. Faith is not a notion, not a sentiment, but an act, a transaction. It is the man selling all that he hath, and buying one goodly pearl.

Wouldst thou know Christ as thy sacrifice, and enter into His life? Put forth thy hand; take fire from off the altar of God for thy dead soul;

make not only thy goods, but thyself an offering, and thou, O sinful, lifeless man, shalt have revealed to thee for thine own, here and hereafter, the everlasting power and peace of God.

The last thought is that though the fire is ever burning on God's altar, yet at times it seems almost to go out, and again it glows with fervent heat. At times the spirit of worldliness, of selfishness, of despair, appears to take possession of mankind. Do not fear; this is God's world still, and His spirit is still dwelling here. Electricity is always about us and in everything we touch, yet for weeks we may see no signs of it; then suddenly its flashes lighten the wide earth and sky. There is always moisture in the air, yet for days in summer we may not have a shower, till all at once the clouds gather and the rain falls. So the Holy Spirit never leaves the world, though at times He is apparently withdrawn; again, as in Pentecostal days, He descends with might on the waiting Church; even worldly society is inspired, and the censers of ten thousand hearts are lighted with the divine, the quickening flame.

THE INDWELLING CHRIST

A SERMON ABOUT BISHOP BROOKS

THE INDWELLING CHRIST

GALATIANS II: 20. *Christ liveth in me*

NOTHING in the New Testament is at once so obvious and so profound as the way in which the divine life, flowing out to men in Jesus Christ, is insisted upon as personal, loving, necessary. This is the centre of all the truth and power of redemption, — the life, the eternal life of God, the loving Father, pouring itself forth for men through Christ the Son, who is the visible incarnation of that life.

This is the great appeal and argument of Christ Himself to a sinful and dying race: "I am come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." In one matchless figure after another, the wonderful simplicity and startling quality of which centuries of familiarity have not dimmed, the Divine Master urges upon us the reality and nearness of this life of God for men. "I am the vine, ye are the branches," He says: "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." Again: "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father:

so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Again: "I am the resurrection and the life," as though there were no other life than that incarnate in Him. Language is constantly put under strain by our Lord to express the intensity of His thought and feeling that in Him and Him alone were men to find eternal life.

No wonder that St. John, the most spiritual of His Apostles, begins his Gospel with the declaration: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men;" and after telling the wondrous story of that life, gathers up the same blessed truth in his First Epistle, saying: "The life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." St. John makes us feel that in dealing with this divine life, which is incarnate in Christ, he is dealing with a reality so intense that nothing can surpass it. "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life," he says, as though no fact visible to the senses

could be more solid and tangible than this of the life of God in human flesh.

St. Paul is not less definite and urgent. His theology has a different method from that of St. John, but the inner core of it is the same great reality, — the divine life revealed in Jesus Christ, and men made partakers of that life by union, through faith, with Him. Christ is "God manifest in the flesh." Hence to be "*in* Christ" — that constantly recurring phrase of St. Paul's writings — is to be a new creature. To have Christ born within one; to have Christ revealed within one; to have Christ dwell in one's heart by faith; to put on the Lord Jesus Christ; to bear in one's body the marks of the Lord Jesus; to have one's life hid with Christ in God, — all these are various phrases which the Apostle presses into his service and charges to the very brim with the passionate conviction that in Christ, God and man are made vitally one; that the human soul, alienated, paralyzed, stunted, dead in trespasses and sins, may yet, opening itself upwards in Christ Jesus, be filled with all the fullness of the life of God.

So intensely personal does the Apostle conceive this sharing of the believer in the life of God which is in Christ Jesus to be, that in this splendid passage of his Epistle to the Galatians he declares: "I am crucified with Christ;" then apparently thinking that to some this may mean the destruction of his own life and personality, he cries, "nevertheless I live." Lest this assertion should, on the other hand, imply too much independence, he instantly qualifies it: "yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Dead, nevertheless supremely alive; yet not alive myself, but alive because Christ, the personal eternal life of God, liveth in me,—this for nineteen centuries is the Christian's simple fundamental confession of faith. In this all doctrine and all ritual have their root. In this all branches and schools of the Church are substantially at one. This great fact and this mighty confession have, indeed, their metaphysics, their proofs, their defences, their appropriate symbols, all of which are useful in their place, and may by no means

be despised, but these are not Christianity. They, as means, may serve to explain and apply it, but Christianity existed before these metaphysics, defences, and symbols were thought of. Christianity has survived immense and continuous changes in them. It will remain when still greater changes come.

For Christianity is not a book, nor a system of dogmas, nor a philosophy, nor a series of rites, nor an institution, nor even a Church; but it is now, in its essential elements, what it was before these existed and what it will be when these shall have been changed, or, in their present form and conception, have passed away. It is simply the eternal life of God in Jesus Christ revealed in the hearts of men and lived out by them as their only true life.

This, when you have dug through the tough rind of the diverse theologies, polities, and rituals by which they are divided, is what you find at the burning heart of all God's true saints, in every Christian generation, and this it is which makes them one, in spite of all their differences over theory and form.

This, too, it is which makes Christianity so

simple and so real. To the mind of the average man to-day it is to be feared that the Christian religion presents itself as complicated, arbitrary, and fantastic. It is to him a jumble of jarring sects, creeds, and rites, full of contradictions, fictions, and fragments magnified into absurd proportions. Whereas, when we get at its inner substance, as exhibited in some great deed, or better in some great life, we are amazed at its pure simplicity, its utter naturalness, its downright reality. Then for an instant it seems almost as though Christ Himself appeared on the earth again, and in the infinite majesty of His presence all our perplexities, doubts, and difficulties vanish.

This also it is which makes Christianity so strong, so enduring. It is not of man, but of God. Sceptics exult and believers tremble when criticism demolishes some opinion which has been entertained respecting the Bible; or when some new conception of the physical universe, like the theory of evolution, is established; or when the creed of the Church is reshaped in the light of fresh knowledge.

They forget that the life of God manifested in Jesus Christ is dependent upon none of these

things; that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; that as His life was revealed to Peter and John by the Sea of Galilee; to Paul on the way to Damascus; to the martyrs and confessors of the first centuries; to the monks, scholars, and pilgrims of the Middle Ages; to the mystics and reformers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; to the Puritans and missionaries of the seventeenth and eighteenth, so it is revealed to, and lived and made more real than ever by, thousands in the midst of all the ferment and permutations of this strange nineteenth century of ours.

It is this life of God in the soul of man, made attainable to every one of us by its personal manifestation in the Divine Son, our Elder Brother, and by our faith in Him, which renders it possible for every man who rises into his full privilege as a child of God to say humbly: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." It is this personal outflowing life of God in Jesus Christ lived over again in the lives of His disciples which constitutes Christianity and makes it simple, strong, perpetual, universal.

Do we not know something of this precious

reality, this sublime and infinite mystery, yet this most intimate and blessed fact? It is a thing that may be analyzed and its elements separated and named as a botanist analyzes a flower, but we shall not know it thus. It may be argued about and proved logically; nevertheless we shall not be convinced of it thus. As it is a life, so it must be attained only by a life process. It must be experienced. Yet when men see its glorious exhibition and forceful, lovely on-going in some really great soul who walks by their side in all the thick of the world's activities, how deeply the spectacle thrills and convicts and exalts men with a sense of the reality and beauty of the Christ life!

One such great soul, so strong, so full, so fair with the divine life as to win the affectionate reverence of all men beyond any one of this generation,—one such great soul has just passed from our sight; from all the limitations of the flesh into the glorious liberty of the redeemed children of God.

Surely, of no man in this generation, or even in this century, could these words of St. Paul be more fitly spoken than of our great bishop; I say

our bishop, for how could we help feeling that he belonged to us almost as much as to his own Church? And it was this very fact which all men saw, namely, that Christ lived in him, which lifted him far above all the boundaries of sect and creed and made him, like St. Paul, the property of the Church universal. Entirely and deeply loyal as he was to his own branch of the Church, it was simply impossible for us to identify him wholly with it, because the Christ that was so signally manifested in him was our Christ and the Christ of all believers, and therefore this man, transcending all sectarian limits, was the brother and bishop of us all.

We knew and loved and thought of him first of all, not as an Episcopalian, but as a Christian. So in the Old South Church, Boston, there was witnessed the unparalleled spectacle of distinguished clergymen, representing every phase of Christian belief, from Unitarian minister to Roman Catholic priest, speaking with choking voice of their personal love and admiration for this man, —not merely as a great man and great preacher, but as their Christian friend and brother.

It was a scene at once memorable and prophetic, — prophetic of a possible Church unity for which no man in this century has done so much as Phillips Brooks, for in him and in his life people saw Christianity singularly divested of its accidents, and that spiritual substance which underlies all sects brought into simple and luminous prominence.

This fact that Christ lived in him was also the secret of his wonderful tolerance, a quality which he not only exhibited with such affluence and perfection in his own life as to confound small zealots, but which he also set forth in two noble lectures with such grasp, such insight, such brave faith in man, as to make these lectures an inspiring classic to all future readers. It is impossible for us now to estimate the magnitude of the work which he thus did for the emancipation of the truth. That this man with his intense faith, his fervid eloquence, his impassioned earnestness, could deliver for years his positive message, and yet be loved and honored most by some from whom he most differed, is, and will continue to be, an object lesson of supreme value.

That Christ lived in him was also the ground of that absolutely wholesome sanity and soundness, that freedom from belittling self-consciousness, that pure manliness and sincerity, which gave him always the same strong, simple manner, whether he was ministering before the Queen of England or serving the needs of his humblest parishioner at Trinity. There was not a shred of convention, of ecclesiasticism, still less of artificiality, about this large figure. He was simply, to rich and poor, to learned and unlearned, to the gray-headed and the little children alike, a great Christ-inspired man, strong to teach, to bear, to live. Hence the singular purity and healthfulness of all his sermons, as absolutely free from suggestion of cant or artifice as they are mighty in their grasp and revelation of the truths that all men are feeling after. Hence the marvellous way in which he made people see through and beyond him the Christ whom he so continuously and fervently preached. Hence the way in which, all unconsciously, he inspired, not the vulgar idolatry which some cheap great men, who master the arts of popularity, inspire, but the deep and rev-

erent affection of the people, beyond any man of his time.

Bishop Brooks had great gifts: an impressive figure, a penetrating intellect, a wonderful and most constructive and illuminating imagination, an extraordinary harmony and wholeness of mental quality. He moved amid circumstances which gave him great advantage; yet these afford no adequate explanation of that strong personal reverence and affection which all classes felt for him, —no explanation of that widespread and profound grief at his death which crowded Copley Square with weeping mourners, and has filled pulpit, platform, press, and private circle with glowing tributes of love and honor such as no man since Lincoln has received.

Yet his was a simple life, as he himself said, with no history, and having a horror of notoriety. It was only a profoundly Christian life. It was a life surprising, attracting, enthralling men, just because in the midst of the fever of this complicated and bustling age, it was a life supremely filled with Christ. It was not a life dwelling in the temporary, or the accidental, but striking its roots

far down into the eternal current that underruns all the ages since Christ came; a life such as St. Paul might have lived had he been a man of to-day, because, like St. Paul's, it was a life in which Christ lived.

To those who cannot rid themselves of the notion that being a Christian consists in meat or drink, in dress, or rite, or peculiarity of speech, or support of this or that doctrine or sect, Phillips Brooks was a puzzle, just as our Lord was a source of confusion to the Pharisees, and St. Paul a cause of hostile bewilderment to the Judaizing teachers of his day.

But those who supposed that therefore our great preacher was careless about Christ and His truth were greatly mistaken. In proportion to his utter indifference to the mint, anise, and cummin, in dealing with which so many small Christians are occupied, in that proportion was the intensity of his faith in the Christ whom all men may receive. One such life is of immeasurable worth to this fumbling generation, which seems to know not, in the midst of all its distracting acquisitions and analyses, where the real heart of Christianity beats.

Christ living in him was the secret also of this wonderful man's abounding hopefulness and optimism, as it was also of his single-hearted devotion to his work. In a way these two conspicuous qualities go together. They are wide of the mark who suppose that his optimism was a mere indulgent and rose-colored view of life, — rose-colored because superficial. In almost every one of his sermons there are evidences of the peril in which he felt sinful men were standing. Underneath that passionate rush of persuasion, that urgency of appeal, which characterized all his public utterances, which were at once so serious, so hopeful, and so dead in earnest, there was always the throb of a consciousness of the awful possibilities of tragedy that belong to the history of a soul.

Nevertheless, like his Lord, like St. Paul, and like all the great men of the past, he preached a "glorious gospel." Not for an instant did he lose faith and hope for man. How could he? Amidst all the negation, apathy, critical paralysis, and almost despair of our times, Christ filled him with a positive, life-giving message, and he spoke it

out with an ardor and inspiration which kindled thousands of souls. Some of his very latest utterances were crowded with eager, yearning appeals to young men to drop their deadening, dwarfing spirit of criticism and be positive with faith and hope. He spoke out of his own experience of the Christ life, and he could not doubt for a moment that this experience might be theirs too.

Here was the explanation of his single aim. No great man of our day has lived a life of such beautiful oneness. He was the broadest and fullest possible man, deeply touching life, literature, travel, art, society, history, as few men, so busy, touch them; yet his own career was like a single jet of water, springing aloft from tremendous pressure in one smooth column to descend in widely extended showers. His sermons have endless variety, yet only a single theme. When he was about to preach in Westminster Abbey, some one asked him what sermon he proposed to deliver. "Sermon!" he replied, "I have but one sermon." It was true; and what was true of his sermons was true of his life. It was all of a piece. Active, varied, eager, yearning, always pulsating,

like St. Paul's, with a consciousness of the swiftly approaching end, it was yet one.

But I must not longer speak of this incomparable man, to know and love whom has been to me, as to thousands of other ministers, a chief inspiration of life, — I must not attempt to say more when hundreds have spoken so much better. He was a man whose unconsciousness of self, whose sincerity, whose childlikeness, whose humility, were so flawless and healthful that it was impossible to praise him in life, and his presence rises now before me to forbid all mere eulogy as beside the mark and unseemly. Let us rather turn for a moment to two or three lessons which this large, this burning life, too soon extinguished here, impresses upon us.

1. It confounds and silences scepticism. No new philosophy, no new evidence, or argument have been formally laid down or delivered for God and Christ and eternal life. Only a great life has been lived completely out in the faith of them; and unbelief seems so irrational, so colorless, so speechless. What can it say? What proof can it offer of its negations that can withstand the conviction

with which all sound hearts to-day respond to the Christ, the eternal life, the victory over sin and the grave, that this majestic personality exhibits?

It is now precisely as it was in Christ's time and in the time of the Apostles. It is the life that bears witness to the truth. It is the life that tells. We overestimate the strength of scepticism. It is weak just because of its arguments which shut out from its view the chief argument of all. The life of Christ shining through a consecrated man has a convincing force which no argument can match. Once more this great fact, so familiar to all the Christian ages, has been set in the fullest light for the instruction of these times.

2. A second lesson from the life of Phillips Brooks — the opposite in some respects of the first, yet still the same and not less important — is that a hard and narrow orthodoxy, which insists upon itself as necessary for salvation; a petty ecclesiasticism, intent upon forms more than upon substance; a bitter sectarianism, which has forgotten the flock in zeal for the fences, — that all these are unchristian and earthy. All these are rebuked and put to shame by the sweetness and breadth and

strength of this great Christian. Oh, how pitiful seems much of the Christianity of the churches, and the schools, and the institutions, and the mission boards, in its ceaseless, bitter wrangle over comparative trifles, when compared with the Christianity of this large, this yearning heart, so full of faith and hope and love for man! And it is the unbelief and unreality of much of the current Christianity, just as it is the unbelief of scepticism, which are brought out and condemned by this, as by every life in which Christ truly lives. Oh, it is the faithlessness and unreality of the orthodox, the ecclesiastic, the zealot, that seem most dreadful in the light of such a life, as it reveals in an instant the divine thing which they all miss.

3. There is a third lesson. This life so sincere, so fresh, so signally devoted and healthful in its heavenly mindedness, so vital with the breath of the Eternal Spirit, so perfectly at home in the world, yet so simply and obviously companion with Christ,—this unique and spiritually tense life must convict us all, I think, of the meanness, folly, and debasement of all our mere earthly ambitions. It must fill us with self-loathing and self-

contempt that we have not made more of ourselves and our opportunities for Christ and His Kingdom. This is the cleansing, helpful ministry of all lofty spirits. They repeat in their measure the office of Christ and convince men of sin. They dwarf the present and enhance the future. They open, by the steadiness, depth, and joyousness of their faith, great vistas into the soul's true privilege and inheritance, and create in the husk-feeding prodigals of the world that aching hunger for God and eternal life out of which all good impulse springs. Does not the inspiration of this true servant of God fill you with a holy discontent that you are still unchristian, or so poor and earthly a Christian?

4. The fourth and final lesson that I shall draw, among a multitude more that might be drawn, from the life of the great bishop is that personal Christian power is still as great and real a thing as it was in the days of the Apostles. No man of our time has made this so apparent as Phillips Brooks. In his great office as preacher, — and this was his one great passion, — he was easily the first man of his time, not because he was more

learned, not because he had higher gifts of intellect and person than other men, but because in the fire of his own intense Christian life the truth was itself transformed into life. To use his own words, it was always "the man behind the sermon." And as his own life was in intense sympathy with the life of to-day, as well as with the life of Christ, which is the same for all ages, his preaching had nothing musty in it, nothing artificial; but with a real gospel he interpreted and met the real present needs of his fellow men.

Men are continually declaring that the power of the pulpit has gone, but, as has been well said, if this is the fact, it is the fault of the pulpit itself. It is because preachers do not "live the life," do not permeate the truth with their own Christ-inspired personality, — it is because of this that the pulpit is weak. The people are still open to the magic of the human voice, if it bears Christ's message from the heart. Phillips Brooks's own career as a preacher, so simple, so direct, so absolutely free from the slightest taint of sensationalism, is the powerful and precious proof of this. As he himself said to the students of Yale, — and it

seems now as though no words could so well describe his own work, — "There is no evidence, I think, in all the absorption in books which characterizes our much reading age, of any real decline of the interest in preaching. Let a man be a true preacher, really uttering the truth through his own personality, and it is strange how men will gather to listen to him. We hear that the day of the pulpit is past, and then some morning the voice of a true preacher is heard in the land and all the streets are full of men crowding to hear him, just exactly as were the streets of Constantinople when Chrysostom was going to preach at the Church of the Apostles, or the streets of London when Latimer was bravely telling the truth at St. Paul's."

Alas, that the same familiar spectacle of like crowds thronging to Trinity to hear Phillips Brooks has, all too soon, passed from our eyes forever! But the inspiration of it remains, a priceless inheritance to every young preacher. To every preacher did I say? Yes, to every Christian as well, for the secret that must clothe the preacher in his pulpit with power, is also the secret that must

make attractive the humblest Christian disciple in his place. It is the Christ within the man. And so I come back to the text with which I started: "Christ liveth in me." Here St. Paul and our great and beautiful friend understand each other. Here the nineteenth century is kindred with the first. This is the one great need of the Church to-day, — not books, not institutions, not organizations, valuable as these may be, but simply men and women in whom Christ lives.

Oh, my dear friends, in the light of this splendid spiritual career, of this great example, so near, so thrilling, so lovely, so glorious, can you hesitate in deciding to make such a life your own?

How fair this life of Christ in the world seems, now that death has touched it with his immortalizing fingers, and the beloved, the sainted bishop speaks to us of Christ, out of the glory, in his own familiar words: "Oh, if we could only lift up our heads and live with Him; live new lives, high lives, lives of hope, and love, and holiness, to which death should be nothing but the breaking away of the last cloud, and the letting of the life out to its completion!"

THE SYRO-PHENICIAN WOMAN

THE SYRO-PHENICIAN WOMAN

St. Matthew xv: 28. *Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt*

THIS verse closes the brief story of the remarkable appeal made to Jesus on behalf of her daughter by the woman of Canaan, or the Syro-Phenician woman, as she is called by St. Mark. The narrative is certainly one of the most striking in the New Testament. It lays open the mystery of prayer, and the power which lies in a humble, believing heart, more directly than any mere philosophy can do. It is a fine instance of the way in which the Bible, by the simplest stories, conveys the profoundest truths. There is so much depth as well as pathos in the incident, that some thought is needed for a right understanding of it, but *in* the understanding of it come some of the sweetest and richest and most helpful lessons which the human heart can learn.

Let us see if we can get some insight into the story. Wearied by the disputes, unbelief, and malice of the Pharisees, Jesus, with a few of

His disciples, goes westward from Galilee into the borders of Tyre and Sidon. A heathen woman approaches Him from a distance. She is an uncovenanted Gentile; she has no place among the Chosen People. But her young daughter is possessed with a devil. She has heard a little about the promised Messiah. The fame of the Great Healer has penetrated her sorrowful home. Therefore, in her anxiety and need, she comes to Jesus and ventures to beg for His pity, saying: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David." At the outset she thus humbly recognizes the Jews as the children of the promise, and Jesus as the all powerful deliverer who comes through them.

Though a heathen herself, she approaches Jesus, not as though He were a mere heathen wonder-worker, but as the Son of David; thus recognizing that salvation is of the Jews, and appealing to Him as the Messiah. But though she begs for mercy, Jesus gives it not. The Evangelist says: "He answered her not a word." He to whom no one ever before came so poor, abject, or helpless that He did not afford relief, now shows no sign of compassion. There is neither refusal

nor encouragement, He is simply silent. What is it that leads Him to this strange withholding of help from a case so pressing? Is it because she —a Gentile—has not a claim upon Him equal to the Jews? Is it because He perceives in her a faith which needs the discipline of waiting that it may grow stronger?

But now the disciples take up the appeal for her; not so much, however, for her sake as for their own. They besought Him, saying: "Send her away," that is, heal her daughter with a word as Thou hast others, and have done with her, "for she crieth after us;" she is an annoyance unto us. It is not so much because the case of this Canaanitish woman is a pitiable one that they thus beseech the Master, as it is because she is disagreeable to them.

To this request of the disciples comes the strange and seemingly harsh utterance of Jesus: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The words are not spoken to the woman, though she seems to hear them. They are addressed to the disciples. They are intended as a plain and earnest reason for His conduct.

He tells them, and He lets the woman hear the words, that His primary message and work are to the house of Israel. By these words, "I am not *sent*," He describes His personal life, His personal work, as wholly subject to His Father's will.

A deep evidence of our Lord's utter humility is here given. He came to earth to execute a commission, and to that commission he will adhere. He gives His disciples, and this woman, to understand that, however much human love of power or His own feelings of compassion might prompt Him to help her, yet the commission by which He is governed is not to her, but to the children of the covenant. The Jews had superior rights. The Messiah's work was for them. Not till after His rejection by them and His exaltation to heaven was salvation to come to the Gentiles. Our Lord, therefore, was under bonds to the divine order; and this he clearly and humbly declares to His disciples and the woman.

There is a profound lesson for us here. We are forever desiring to have our own way; to do something for which we are not fitted; and to leave undone the thing that the Divine Provi-

dence has specially laid on us. Not so Christ. He says in substance, I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me, and that will has sent me first to Israel's lost sheep. I must wait. I must not, by healing this woman's daughter, arouse the whole Gentile world, and bring them in swarms to my feet. That might be more gratifying to personal ambition, but in doing it I should be taking my work, and the scope of it, into my own hands, and disregarding my instructions as the anointed Son of David. I desire that you, my disciples, and also this woman shall feel this, and know that she is as it were cut off from my healing offices.

But if we take this view of our Lord's words, how are we to explain His subsequent yielding to the demands of this woman? In this way: He will have His disciples and the woman herself recognize the intrinsic obstacles in the way of giving assistance to her. He will have them perceive His own obedience. But He saw in her a spiritual child of Israel. He saw in her faith, which rose at length over every obstacle, a reason sufficient for His making an exception in her case, — an excep-

tion which should at once testify that faith in Christ is the same saving act whether exercised by Jew or Gentile; and which should also prophesy the future oneness of Gentiles and Jews in the reception of a common salvation. There is thus both a commendation of faith and a foreshadowing of the universal reign of Christ, in this story.

But what a trial did these words, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," bring to the woman herself! Could she repress the questions: "Do I then belong outside the chosen, covenanted flock?" "Have I no claim on the love and promise of my God?" What anguish and helplessness the thought must have given her!

When once a soul stops and thinks that perhaps itself or some of its friends are not among the covenanted ones, what despair the thought brings! How often we see persons who, having made repeated half attempts to become Christians, and having failed, instead of pressing on, fall back into that kind of weak fatalism which says: "Well, I 'm not to blame, I've tried and tried to become a Christian and I can't. It must be that the grace of God is not intended for me." How

often we get discouraged respecting children or dear friends, for whom we long have prayed, and who are not converted; until gradually we relax our efforts, saying, or unconsciously thinking, "Well, I am afraid such or such a person may never have been intended to be saved; and that he or she does not belong to the flock of God's chosen Israel." How often we feel in this way about certain classes of men! Such thoughts depress and paralyze. Must not this woman have felt them? Could there be any relief for her, or for her daughter? Had not the Saviour's own words cut off every ray of hope? What will she do now? Retire to sulk over her own and her daughter's supposed reprobation from the mercy of the Saviour? Not she. She is not of that temper. Will she sink into a hopeless desperation and repining at the supposed injustice of God? Not at all. Will she cease her efforts for aid from the Great Healer? Oh, no. She rests not an instant in these thoughts. In proportion as it is opposed, her faith leaps up. It is like a stream of water running against a barrier,—the higher the obstacle, the higher the rise. Now she draws near and comes to Him.

Before she seems to have been at a distance. Now I see her worshipping Him. Before she had only cried out to Him. Now I behold her blocking His way and saying: "Lord," not "O Lord, thou Son of David," as before; for she feels that she has no right to the covenant of David's Son; but "Lord," Almighty, universal Lord, who sendest Thy rain on the just and the unjust, "Lord, help me." It is the most condensed prayer, wrung from the anguish of her heart. She does not any longer say, "Have mercy on me." But her thought concentrates itself upon the one thing she *must* have — "help."

Our prayers are often loaded with a great deal of useless rubbish. It is a wonder how they ever get to God's ear at all, when they carry along such a huge baggage of swelling words and vain specifications. This woman's prayer grows terse in proportion to her faith and dependence, till it reduces itself to three little, but mighty words: "Lord, help me."

Will Christ help her? Not yet. Her humility must be lower still; her faith higher. He now turns to her directly. He brings the thought which

He had already addressed to the disciples, immediately, and in a form far more crushing and bitter, to her. "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." Oh, severe, cold, and cutting words! Can it be *Jesus*, the all-compassionate One, who utters this? Can it be He who wept at the grave of Lazarus; and who sympathized with the heartbroken widow of Nain? There is indeed no express refusal, but the woman must recognize completely her position. Jesus seems to say to her: "Call me not Son of David; for thou art of the heathen. I am indeed David's Son to the children of Israel's table; but thou art of the dogs. I do indeed bring bread to the children, but it is not fit to give that bread to thee." Most reproachful and discouraging words are these! Surely now the woman will be driven off. Surely now she will become angry, and turn her back upon Him. And yet these words have in them some hints of kindness and hope. It is as though Jesus said, These Jews, cruel and persecuting as they are, are yet the children of the promise; and it is not proper that I take, contrary to the order of my Father's house, the

bread of these covenant children and cast it to dogs. The Jews might complain. I cannot put you, a heathen, on a level with them, however much they may have sinned; for they are children still. It is partly for them that I speak.

Thus the words of Jesus do not close the case against the woman. Every *right* must be taken away from her and given to the Jews, just as every claim to righteousness must be taken away from a sinner before he can be helped. And yet in this word, "it is not meet," it is not fitting, "to take the children's bread," there is concealed the prophecy of mercy even for this woman. Christ does not say, "it is not possible;" but only "it is not orderly." Yet it is only the faith that *will* not let the Lord go; it is only the humility that takes even His apparent rebuffs as intended for good, that can see here the inducements to a greater prayer.

If we would but look sharply and humbly enough, we should see even in the apparent rejection of our prayers by our Heavenly Father, the arguments for our praying again. Unanswered prayers may be but God's telling us to

pray better; to pray more honestly and humbly; so that even in His delay, if we will but give up all pride and foolish conceit, we may see the encouragement of our faith.

Does it not often occur to you that God intends to make our prayers the avenues of more and other things than we pray for? We ask for health, but God, though willing to grant us that, sees that we need faith and humility still more, and so He makes us wait that we may get these. Did Christ care for the bewitched daughter of this woman of Canaan? Doubtless. But far more for the drawing out of a triumphant faith in the mother herself. We shall understand many unanswered prayers when we remember that God cares more for the production of holiness in us than for anything else. "I would be like Thee, O my God." When this thought takes possession of a soul it is invincible. It will not be put down. Its robust faith sets its foot on all else. It piles the fragments of broken hopes one upon another and climbs into heaven upon them; just as soldiers mount a breach by standing on the dead bodies of their comrades. God encourages

the faithful soul by the very delays of His providence. He makes even His refusal at once to answer our prayers, the incentive for our praying again. So this woman is roused by defeat. The reply of Christ was severe. Yet there lurked in it a grain of hope; for the word translated "dogs" is really "little dogs," "pet dogs," as though Christ would show some pity even for her. The woman accepts the place which the Lord assigns her, but she catches a glimpse of the concealed tenderness which is in the phrase "little dogs."

Oh, it is better for the sinner to take at once, and honestly, the judgment of God respecting him for the truth. She takes it so. She does not murmur. There is no revolt of hurt pride; but in a perfect self-abasement, which accepts all Christ's utterance respecting her unworthiness as the simple truth, and yet with a fine insight which discovers His love, and with a clinging trust which will not let Him go without the blessing, she grasps at the kindly phrase "little dogs," in which Christ had as it were betrayed His heart to her, and casts her soul on that. With a keenness which only faith exhibits, she, as

Luther says, "catches Him in His own words." "Truth, Lord," or as St. Mark has it, "Yes, Lord," she says; accepting the words of Christ without one rebellious thought,—"Yes, Lord."

In this word was the secret of her victory. Her case was won when she had said this "Yes." Not till the sinful soul acknowledges deeply with a humble "Yes, Lord," all that the Holy Spirit tells it of its own outcast and lost condition, can it hope for an answer to its prayer. But this is just what the sinful heart does not do. When the Divine Spirit reveals to an impenitent man his sinful state, then he is apt to reply with unsubdued pride, "No, Lord. No, I am not so bad as Thou dost tell me." And when a Christian bows himself in prayer for some proper object, and the same Spirit, while he prays, teaches him that his heart is not right in the eyes of God; that he is full of selfishness, or pride, or jealousy; then he often declares with the half-angry and energetic protest of his soul, "No, no, Lord," and from such prayer he rises up with a dull feeling of hopelessness, unanswered and unblest.

Not so this mother from Syro-Phœnicia. Her humble acknowledgment is parallel with the Lord's deep and severe statement of her uncovenanted condition. She confesses all the sad, painful truth with her wonderful "Yes, Lord." But does she rest there? Does she merely admit her own and her daughter's outcast estate, and despairingly make no effort further; like some sinners, accepting indeed what the Spirit teaches them about their sins, and having a kind of subtle pride in the misery of their conviction? Does she become motionless in her despair? Not she; but with the marvellous insight of faith, she seizes assentingly her own condemnation from the lips of her Lord, and turns it into a more urgent plea for His help. With the impetuous despair of motherhood, she flings herself at His feet, in the place He appoints, for there she is irresistible.

Adopting the very illustration of Jesus for her own, she fashions it with swift energy into the argument deepest of all. Yes, Lord, all true: yet because it is true, Thou must help me; for the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their masters' table. Oh, wonderful passion and pleading of hu-

man trust, that can thus lay hold of the seemingly closed hand of God and seize the blessing! "Yes, Lord: *yet.*" "Yes: yet!" Here is the innermost secret of the Christian's victory. In the connection of these two words is seen the mystery of prayer, the wonder of salvation. The "yes" is humble confession, acknowledgment, penitence. It is the complete harmonizing of the soul with the Divine Will. The "yet" is the soul, in the might of free agency, uplifting itself on that will in one supreme effort, storming heaven in the arrogance of humility, and making its very unworthiness, and need, and sin, its unconquerable plea for favor. "Dogs," Thou hast said? Yes, Lord. I know that name is for me. I own it. I *am* separated from Thee. My sins *have* made me an outcast. I *have* no claim on Thy mercy — except the claim that I am a helpless sinner. Oh, yes, it *is* true. *Yet* even the dogs are allowed a place *beneath* their masters' table. Even they may eat of the crumbs. For that place only, taking Thee at thy word, O Saviour, I plead. For those crumbs alone, using Thine own figure of speech, O Thou Redeemer of men, I beg. Thus does the faith of this woman outrun the

utmost apparent severity and delay of Christ, and in an instant His gracious heart gives way in the reply: "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Or as St. Mark puts it: "For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter."

What depths of tenderness are in this answer! Before, Christ had not very directly accosted this praying mother, but now he speaks to *her*, with that word which shows her the heart of her Redeemer: "O woman, great is thy faith." And it is not merely the granting of her request which is prominent. He speaks not chiefly of her daughter, —that comes later; but as though the real victory, the real answer to her prayer was the faith that had so triumphed, He commends that. "Great is thy faith." Not her importunity, nor her motherly solicitude for her daughter, for these were natural; not her humility, even, for that was but an element of trust; but He praises her *faith*,—that quality which allies the soul with the omnipotence of God; which overcomes; which stops not at obstacles, but makes them stepping-stones to its final conquest. Surely this beautiful and touching

story, after eighteen hundred years, may reach to-day the case of all doubting, helpless souls who here are seeking either their own or others' entrance into life.

And now let us gather up in a few words some of the most obvious lessons which have only been referred to in the body of this discourse. And first:

We get a deep glimpse here of the nature of faith,—the faith which saves; the faith which Jesus commends. Obviously it is not knowledge. Clearly it is not the mere upholding of certain doctrines as true. Surely it is not mere sentiment, the rush of feeling in view of truth. It is the act of the will by which one clings to the Saviour alone. It is "the perfect womanhood of the soul." Faith is preceded by knowledge; it is accompanied by feeling; but more than these, it is a *purpose*. It is well contained in those determined words of Jacob at the brook, when, wrestling with the angel, his thigh out of joint, he could only as it were throw his arms about the neck of the heavenly messenger and cry: "I *will not* let thee go, except Thou bless me." Let no one say, then, he

is unable to put faith in Christ; for faith is, as it were, inability. It is the power of powerlessness. Hence its expression is the Christian paradox: "When I am weak, then am I strong."

The prayer of faith — prevailing prayer — is not mere importunity; the repetition without any progress of one parrot-like request. It is irrational to suppose that such prayer can avail anything with God. But the importunate prayer that is commended by this story and elsewhere in the Scriptures is prayer that makes headway. It is prayer by which the petitioner's own faith is enlarged; prayer which continually reveals to the soul more and more of its own nakedness and want; prayer which perpetually discovers more and more dependence on God; and prayer which makes these discoveries of the soul's own helpless state and God's mighty power, the scaffolding to simpler and larger requests. All true prayer is progressive, and rational in proportion to its progress.

God doubtless sees that we are not fit to have many of our prayers answered, and therefore withholds answers that He may teach us how to pray better. Unbelief is an unwillingness and

an incapacity for the very blessings for which it often pretends to ask, and which it complains it does not receive. The bigness of our petitions is often only the pitiable sign of the littleness of the souls from which they proceed; and God sometimes through long years of failure in our prayers has to set us at work to trim them down, and enlarge our souls for the praying of simpler and more genuine ones.

There is in this story the profoundest encouragement for all those who would find the Saviour. In this tender story, my friends, He shows you His gracious heart, — a heart that is ever waiting for your complete forsaking of sin and utter trust in Him. Do there seem to be peculiar obstacles in your case? Do you seem by your original constitution or circumstances to be cut off from the privileges that others have? Do you say, "Oh, it seems easy for others to be Christians, for they were almost born so. They have a religious nature, while I am but an outcast." Or do you say: "I have not deep feelings," or "I am so bound up in external things that I fear it is impossible for me to become a

Christian." If you have any such thoughts as these about yourself, then remember this woman. Rest not in these excuses, but make them your deepest argument for divine help. Turn your very necessities into petitions. Make your weakness, your strength; your peril, your power; your very despair the instrument of the divinest grace. Frankly, and in your deepest heart, admit what a hopeless sinner you are, and then you shall find how great a Saviour Jesus is.

A MAN FULL OF FAITH AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A MAN FULL OF FAITH AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Acts vi: 5. *A man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit*

SUCH was Stephen, the first martyr. But I am not to speak of him, except as a type.

We know little of his origin, his personal appearance, his education, his age, his circumstances. Nevertheless, through this short text, as through some clear lens, we seem this morning to look over all the breadth of nineteen centuries and behold the personality of this heroic saint of God as he, the first of all the long and glorious roll, lays down his life for the testimony of Jesus.

The sharpness with which his entire character is outlined by a stroke against the background of that earliest history of the Church, is due to the fine combination in him of two distinct, yet congruous factors, — on the one hand, personal force, on the other hand, divine indwelling; power here, grace there; or, as my text puts it, he was "full of faith and of the Holy Spirit."

It is no accident that the moral and spiritual

portrait of this striking figure of the nascent Church is sketched for us in this phrase, which indicates a union in him of these two transcendent elements. It seems to me that he is for this reason held up to us as a typically great Christian, and so a typically great man.

As a stream of oxygen and a stream of hydrogen, united and burning upon a bit of lime, make an intense, white light; so in Stephen, the current of the human will and the current of divine grace; the faith of the man and the Spirit of God, completely mingling, shine like a star through the gloom.

Is it not true that all great men — all men who are practically effective in moral and spiritual character and influence — exhibit a similar proportionate combination? In some true sense they are full of faith and of the Holy Spirit. So are the mighty eras of the Church. In them the plenitude of man is fused with the plenitude of God. They are double, yet one.

Nature itself, in all its forms, shows us the necessity for this union of individual energy with divine overshadowing, before anything living,

strong, and fair results. Everywhere there is duality merging into oneness.

Take a grain of wheat into your hand. Within that brown kernel there is a vital potentiality — a faith power, so to speak — that, rightly combined with soil and moisture, with sunshine and air, can cover hundreds of square miles with golden harvests, and feed thousands of happy people. But hide that grain within a crevice of a rock, in the dryness and the dark, and it will remain inert for centuries.

The universe is made up of counterparts. There is the eye with its yearning and fitness, and there is the inscrutable light to meet the want and readiness of the eye. What is almost the miracle of sight is the result of the two. There are the stores of fuel in forests and coal-beds, with their imprisoned heat to warm a world, and there is the mysterious capacity of the atmosphere, hanging above, to unite with them in the combustion that sets free their energy in furnace and forge, in steaming kitchen and flying locomotive, in factory and steamship, to nourish and clothe and transport earth's thronging millions.

Everywhere, from the top to the bottom of existence, the secret of power, of success, is in bringing the two factors, the two counterparts, together. It is not the solid land alone, nor yet the viewless air alone, but it is the blending of both that makes the earth teem with verdure and life. And there is nothing in the world more distressing than to see one of the halves of that which might be a strong union trying to get on alone; the seed struggling to obtain a foothold in the dry sand, or among the unyielding rocks; the ship becalmed with drooping sails because it has lost the wind; a fortune useless or even corrupting because it lacks the touch of consecration; human intellect or human affection becoming dwarfed and frigid because it takes hold of no worthy object; the man growing hard and unloving because he is without God,—these are instances of that which we see on every side,—the poverty, loss, and powerlessness of non-adjustment between parts that should go together to make a strong and beautiful whole.

Such a whole was the personality of Stephen,—"A man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit."

Now, faith is man's element — man's side of this vital completeness. Faith is the soul's worthy endeavor. It may almost be said to be the soul in right action towards an object, — especially towards a person, — especially towards God. In this sense faith is essential to our conception of man. Without it he is little more than a clod. The husbandman plows his field and sows his seed. It is an act of faith in the forces of nature which he believes will in due time bring him the harvest. The merchant sends his ships afar, he stocks his warehouses with goods, because he trusts the needs of the people to buy. The banker loans his funds; the inventor struggles to perfect his machine; the scholar devotes himself to researches; the statesman proposes his measures, and the patriot dies fighting for his country, — all because the soul reaches out to grasp a good, tangible or intangible, seen or unseen, that is beyond its present possession or attainment. This flinging one's self on the future, on the unrealized; this going forth of the will to seize the future's desired substance, — this is the constant effort of mankind in the long history of development, and

this is essentially faith. Of course its quality depends upon its object.

When a man to-morrow morning stakes all his property upon an undeveloped mine or railroad, we may not call that faith: we shall probably call it nerve; but it is in essence the same thing which a man does when he trusts his soul to the Saviour. If people sometimes talk against faith as unreasonable when it is exercised towards divine things, they talk against the very thing which they are exercising in other directions every day; without which, indeed, all the busy activities of the world would at once cease.

Faith unreasonable? It is only when men are full of that same unreasonable thing that they discover continents, bridge rivers, build universities, drag diseases from their secret lair and strip them of their terrors, remove abuses, and create all the fair highways of human well-being.

We do not always recognize the features of faith when it delves thus among material things, but in reality it is the same quality that at other times makes the soul — weary of earthly objects, overwhelmed with a sense of its sins, hungry to know

the secrets of spiritual life — lift its hands upwards to take hold of the infinite God. When faith does this last sublimest and most reasonable thing of all, then some people charge it with folly, though they honor it enough when it bakes their bread, weaves their cloth, and cuts their wood.

Nobody thinks of admiring an unbelieving man except in religion, the very place where belief is most admirable. What sort of men are wanted to bring electricity out of its mystery, by the patience of years, and make it easily applicable to so many ends of life? Why, men of faith, of course. Who shall lead us in the effort to overthrow slavery; to reform politics; to build a world's fair; to heal the open sores of pauperism and crime? Sceptical men? Men withered in heart and paralytic in fingers with unbelief? No; men full of faith. These are the earth's conquerors; these the men of might in every department of this world's great workshop, whose story of foresight, daring, achievement, is the fascinating lyric of all the generations. Indeed, scarcely can a man have honest shoes on his feet, or honest food in his mouth, unless his soul throbs with

at least some faint pulsation of this multiform and omnipresent energy of faith, which, in its supremest exercise, beats down sin and death, realizes God as the soul's friend, and takes the kingdom of heaven by violence. So that as far as *one* element of character is concerned, every man who amounts to anything is in some degree like Stephen.

But there is another element in the character of this first martyr which, like faith, is, in some sense and in some degree, always present with man. It is the Holy Spirit. Faith is the human factor: the Holy Spirit is the divine factor in the whole of a dominant personality like Stephen's.

However, what is true of faith is true of the Spirit, namely this, that as men have generally limited the action of faith to religious things, so they have thought that the sphere of the Spirit was wholly in religion. They have supposed that there was something very exceptional and unreal about the Spirit. This is not the view of the Bible. In the Old Testament the Spirit is with men in practical affairs. It is the Spirit who ministers skill and taste in handicraft to the artificers

of the tabernacle and temple; who gives strength to Samson; sagacity to Solomon; statesmanship to Nehemiah; eloquence, moral insight into affairs, and prophetic grasp to Amos, Ezekiel, and Isaiah. In the New Testament, after the ascension of our Lord, the Spirit overshadows and permeates the whole life of the Church. The Apostles preach, select companions, plan journeys, collect money, administer charities, and do business under His inspiration.

True, as the highest exercise of faith is towards Christ and the spiritual life, so the loftiest office of the Spirit is in testifying of God to the heart, in convincing of sin, in revealing Christ, and in quickening heavenly affections. Nevertheless, since God, as the race hastens on in its development, is manifestly more and more in His world, I think we have a right to assume that He is, by His Spirit, in some degree always moving in the hearts of all men, even in things often deemed wholly secular, even in affairs that seem to belong only to this earth. May we not believe that, as He is the spirit of truth, so He inspires all that patient, sincere inquiry into matter

and the forces of matter, into history, into man in his wondrous constitution, which inquiry has given us the stupendous fabric of modern science: that, as He is the spirit of righteousness and purity, He is continually stirring the souls of men to make government more upright, and commerce more honest, and society cleaner: that, as He is the spirit of love, so He is always inclining men to sympathy for the poor, the weak, the helpless, and leading us to contrive hospitals, universities, settlements, missions, and schools for the oppressed classes, and to administer these both with increasing unselfishness and increasing wisdom: that, as He is the spirit of holiness and beauty, so He is always making men ashamed of base motives and unhallowed tastes in amusements and art, and appealing to them to despise the vulgar, the ugly, the vicious in life and conduct?

Oh, the Holy Spirit is not some far-off, unnatural, fictitious influence, but He is awfully near and practical, at the rise of every thought and feeling, at every decision, forever pleading within us against all that is bad, and on behalf of all that is good. It is true that His greatest function is in tak-

ing of the things of Christ and showing them unto us; is in renewing the soul with the life of God; yet to this supreme end He is with us in buying and selling, in studying and teaching, in voting and praying, in preaching and athletics, always, everywhere, gently, persistently, lovingly to press upon us the nobler thought, the purer motive, the diviner affection, the more heavenly choice.

Now, to achieve the effective and beautiful wholeness of a character like Stephen's, it is needful to match every such movement of the Spirit with a corresponding movement of faith. Within the chambers of the soul the fullness of God must be met by the fullness of man; the divine must be grasped by the human; the will of man must appropriate and act out for its own the inspiration of God. In this union, as in the adjustment of eye and light, seed and soil, is the secret of moral power both for the individual and the Church. It is not man alone; it is not God alone; but it is man by faith possessing God, and it is God by His Spirit inhabiting man. In short, it is the character of Stephen, suddenly flashing out clear and strong in the very morning of Chris-

tianity, which gives us to-day the model of all moral and spiritual force,— "A man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit."

There have been individuals, churches, and eras that have had some measure of one of these factors, but have been relatively powerless because they had very little of the other. Thus there are people who have a kind of faith; but it is a faith in themselves, in their own righteousness, in their own good estate as complete and sufficient, and they reject divine inspiration: they practically deny the Spirit. We all know such people. We freely confess that there is much that is admirable about them. They boast that they are not visionary or sentimental. They are often very complacent and very dogged in their virtues. But do they not often appear unsympathetic, dull, hard, and uninspiring? They dwell in the letter. They magnify power of will, but they have no divine inspiration. They lack the touch of God.

There is another class of persons very like these, yet different. They are the people who have faith, but it is faith in their own orthodoxy, in their system, in their ecclesiastical standing, or

in various religious organizations and contrivances. They continually magnify and trust in these. Like those who have faith in their own virtues, these people, too, are often, perhaps generally, very dreary, very dull, very wearisome. Their hard, unsympathetic quality constantly repels. Their trouble is exactly the trouble of the others, the absence of the Spirit's kindling grace. Their faith does not lay hold of God, but terminates in systems and machineries. They are always sure that the preaching of this or that scheme, or the use of this or that tool, will bring in the kingdom; but all their efforts — often very noisy and energetic — still somehow lack the gospel life and efficiency.

The difficulty is that both these classes of excellent people overwork and depend upon the human factor, and neglect the divine factor. It is a case of loss through non-adjustment. And all through the long history of the Church, you will find periods characterized by this self-righteous and system-depending quality — barren periods, full of a certain ostentatious activity, but an activity untouched by the Spirit. It sometimes seems to

me that we are now in such a period, — a period overstocked with tools, full of reliance upon mechanism, eager, bristling with appliance, serviceable to the point of weariness, yet unacquainted with God, and so lacking spiritual depth and power.

Now, in exact opposition to all this, there are, curiously enough, periods and men in the Church in whom the divine inspiration overmatches the human reception of it; in whom the Spirit is felt, and in a certain way acknowledged, but not fully met, appropriated, and acted upon. Such are the pious sentimentalists and day-dreamers of the Church, and of certain eras; people who glory in their spiritual states, the mystical advocates of perfect holiness, who talk so much about their possession of the Spirit, while they have no relish for the tasks He suggests, that they raise doubts as to their entire moral sincerity and healthfulness.

There have been times when a large part of the Church was marked by this relative excess of what at least has seemed to be divine inspiration: when the Spirit was near, but when His incentives were not matched by a corresponding purpose; when faith was not active in carry-

ing bravely out in practical deeds His heavenly promptings; and so such times, like the others, have been comparatively fruitless. Again the trouble has been the old one: non-adjustment, failure proportionately to combine, lack of real union between parts that must work together to make a whole. Theoretically, of course, it is impossible on the one hand to have too much faith, or on the other hand too much of the Spirit; and while genuine faith tends to increase the presence of the Spirit, and the Spirit sincerely received develops faith, yet it is not the one, nor yet the other, alone, that constitutes the true saint and servant of God; both must unite in one indivisible personality, in which human power shall fully realize itself only in divine grace, and divine grace shall find its matter-of-fact outlet in human power. As the coal in the fire-box of the boiler develops no force until it is kindled by a spark, yet as a spark can do nothing until it falls upon the coal, so the soul must be lighted by the divine breath, and the divine breath must find a willing soul, and then there is produced for every sphere of life that most wonderful thing on earth, — because, like

the Lord Jesus, at once the most human and the most divine, — "A man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit;" a man, on the one hand, cool, positive, hard-headed, strenuous, mighty in what seems his own self-sustained will-power to suffer, to dare, to achieve; and on the other hand, a man as humble, gentle, and flexible as a little child, with soul all mystical, soft, and open to the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

There have been such men in these later years, thank God; men like Livingstone, and Pattison, and Gordon; yes, Gladstone, Lincoln, and our own chivalrous Armstrong, — latter-day Stephens, with all his mingled heroism and saintliness. We have known such men in humbler spheres, yet not less real in quality; men in business as well as in professions; mechanics as well as ministers.

Through them Christ, whom they follow, manifests Himself. They live His life and sacrifice over again. The Holy Spirit is forever setting their souls on fire with purer and loftier ideals, as Christ and His Kingdom, in the permutations of modern life, are more and more revealed to them;

and their faith — working by love — is forever making good these ideals in actual deeds.

"Men full of faith and of the Holy Spirit." Such are the men most demanded by the world to-day. We need them in business, to break up its materialism, its selfishness, its gambling tendency, and to realize in it higher and more Christian standards of dealing; until business itself shall become a witness of the Gospel. We need them in politics, to banish mean party spirit and the corrupt trading that pollutes all statesmanship; and to exalt and make real the principles of righteousness and Christian patriotism, so that every legislator and office-bearer shall of necessity be a servant of the Gospel.

We need them in education, to simplify and spiritualize all the wheels of our systems, so that every school and college shall become a real fountain of the wisdom and light, the grace and power, of the Gospel. We need them in the Church itself, — oh, so much, — to bid it cast off its worldliness, its unbelief, its sectarian pride, its narrowness, its trust in shallow expedients, its foolish and unhallowed ambitions for earthly vanities, and to

make it put on the beautiful garment of heavenly and practical consecration to Christ in a mighty testimony to the power of the Gospel.

"A man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit." Oh, have you no longing and enthusiasm to be such yourself,—you especially who are just preparing to step upon the threshold of active life, beginning to enter the great moral struggle of society which these closing years of the nineteenth century are seeing,—have you no ambition, no passion, to enter this most perplexing and thrilling moral struggle,—not as a bubble, blown hither and thither on the flood, but, like a modern Stephen, resolute yet gracious, a fervent witness, by character and deed, to the highest things of the divine kingdom; as a man in whom fullness of faith shall be united with fullness of the Holy Spirit? Oh, then, train head, and hand, and will in obedience to God, and lift up your hearts to Him in humble trust, as flowers open themselves upward to the sunlight, and let Him touch and consecrate every secret spring within you, till, for all that the coming days may demand, you shall be full of power and grace.

THE WASTE OF THE OINTMENT

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St. Mark xiv: 4. *Why was this waste of the ointment made?*

ACCORDING to St. John, it was Judas who put this question, and he put it because he was a thief. According to the other Evangelists, it was the disciples, or some of the disciples, who asked the question. But there is no inconsistency in these two accounts. Doubtless the thievish, treacherous Judas started the inquiry, and then the other disciples were captious enough to take it up. You know it is common in our day to hear just such a shallow and cruel criticism of some noble deed, of some devoted life, set going and made popular among a thoughtless multitude by one narrow-minded and base man. So it was in this case.

And what was the occasion of it all? Jesus, a few days before his crucifixion, is reclining at a hospitable table in his favorite Bethany. A woman (St. John says it was Mary), flaming with the prophetic insight and ardor of love, approaches Him, bearing in her hands an alabaster cruse of precious perfume, and breaking its long, slender

neck, she pours out upon His head in unthinking profusion the costly ointment. St. John says it was upon His feet, which later she wiped with her hair. No doubt both statements are true. For after the head, there was more than enough for the feet, inasmuch as we read that "the house was filled with the odor of the ointment,"—a single lifelike touch of the narrative, impossible for any one but an eye-witness to make, and which overthrows much of the criticism directed against the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel.

But what of the large expense which was involved in this extravagant act of the woman? Judas said that the ointment might have been sold for three hundred pence—or three hundred denarii—and given to the poor; and as a denarius equalled about seventeen cents, the whole amount corresponds to more than fifty dollars of our currency; and if we consider the greater purchasing power which money then had,—for a denarius, or seventeen cents, was the pay for a day's labor,—the amount represented a sum three or four times as great as now, say one hundred seventy-five or two hundred dollars, a large amount surely to be

spent in a single anointing of one person's head and feet,—an anointing which left absolutely nothing substantial to show for itself; an amount large enough to do a world of good among the poor.

Surely the question which forms my text was a very proper and plausible one. The objection made by the shrewd, clear-headed, thrifty, and withal benevolent Judas to the act of this woman certainly sounds reasonable. And since it is, in principle, substantially the same objection which is often heard in our day, we are glad that he was at hand, just then and there, to make it, in the face and eyes of this woman and her Lord, that we might have forever for our guidance His reply —His way of treating such an objection: "To what purpose was this waste?"

In its various aspects, material and spiritual, waste is well-nigh the most awful fact of human life; the badge and exponent, yes, one might almost say the very substance, of sin. Let us hear, then, what Jesus has to say in defence of this apparent throwing away of two hundred dollars —more or less.

In the first place, He does not say anything about Judas's bad heart and bad motive in asking the question. He knew it well enough. St. John knew it, and says that Judas made the objection, "not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and having the bag, took away what was put therein;" that is, was accustomed to handle the common cash; accustomed greedily to finger it; perhaps now and then to appropriate some to his own use; certainly having a thievish lust for money; therefore blind to its higher uses, and therefore, in making this objection, a downright hypocrite and traitor. Surely Jesus saw all this as plainly as the day, and He might have unmasked the thief and crushed him and his objection with a word; but He did not do this, doubtless because He wished to deal with the objection wholly apart from the personal character and motive of the man who made it, — a wonderful example of self-restraint which we would do well to follow, and for which we are profoundly grateful.

In the second place, when our Lord does speak, observe that it is first of all in defence of the

woman and her act. How she, in her single-hearted love, like many a woman since, must have been amazed and distressed by these hard murmurings incited by Judas. Hear her saying to herself: Have I, then, done such a foolish, wasteful thing? Is it all an awkward failure,—this act which I so long lovingly thought of, and now have gladly done?

The first word of Jesus, with a most sympathetic tact, is directed to reassure her. "Why trouble ye the woman?" He says. He takes her and her deed instantly under His large protection. "She hath wrought a good"—nay, as the word might better be translated, a more than good, a beautiful, and therefore good because beautiful —"work upon me." That which has obvious, matter-of-fact usefulness is not the only good. There are many things which are good, good in the very highest sense, simply because they are beautiful. Their beauty *is* their use. And this good, this fitting, this beautiful work, "she hath wrought upon me." Observe for a moment what calm self-assertion there is here. If Jesus were merely man,—a very perfect man, but still only

man,—it would be hardly possible for Him coolly to assume to be worthy of such honor as the woman paid Him, and yet be regarded as having such humility as is proper to a perfect man.

And now, in the third place, He touches directly upon the objection raised in the question of Judas: "Why was not this ointment sold and given to the poor?" Our Lord's reply is: "For ye have the poor always with you, and whensoever ye will ye can do them good." This last clause is added in the narrative of St. Mark alone. Obviously it is a gentle, half-ironical hint at Judas's hypocrisy; as much as to say: You need not be kept from your proposed benevolence towards the poor by the lavish and loving deed of this woman. If you are really in earnest in your desire that the poor be benefited, there is nothing to hinder you from immediately and constantly setting about it, for ye have them always with you, but me ye have not always. By these words Our Lord at once lifts Himself above the poor, and also deeply identifies Himself with them. He hints that what is done for Him is done for them, not, indeed, always by way of giving them bread

and butter, shoes and shelter, but in far higher ways. Their cause and His are one. Their most precious redemption and exaltation are forever wrapped up in the honor which is paid to Him.

There is no true and permanent elevation ever to be wrought for the needy and degraded, except as the divine and human sonship of Jesus is recognized and honored; and so their spiritual lineage and birthright and destiny in Him are apprehended. "Inasmuch as ye did your kind act to one of the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto me," you remember He says at the last great day. And here He intimates that what is done for Him is, in the highest sense, done for the poor. "The poor ye have with you always: but me ye have not always."

Ah, yes; human poverty and suffering and woe are awfully real, tangible, constant, immeasurable factors of this world of ours. But Jesus in His earthly, bodily presence was soon to pass from the sight of His disciples into His glory. What, therefore, was done for Him in the body, as a poor and suffering man, type, embodiment, and redemption of all poor suffering humanity,

must be done at once and quickly; must be done generously; must be done with significant cost; but every bit that is so done, is done, too, for the poor, yet in a way infinitely larger, more helpful, more redemptive than any distribution in alms of three hundred pence. Do you not know that there are ways proposed for helping suffering mankind —the methods of crass and materialistic minds —which degrade, rather than help? Jesus perpetually stands for the spiritual content, the divine inheritance, of every man. In Him all the blood of all the nations runs. What, therefore, was done for His exaltation by that one woman in the hour of His approaching humiliation and agony was really done for the uplifting of all wretched men since.

Is it not clear enough that in certain circumstances the honor done to one single, even ordinary man —or group of men —at disproportionate cost, is the directest, cheapest way of helping the whole?

A handful of men sail to explore the regions of the North pole. They dare the perils of the Arctic. They are gone for two years. No tidings.

A cruel suspicion quivers through the nation that they are perishing. The deepest feelings of human nature, the inexplicable sympathy for life, the dim consciousness of the worth of man, the honor of sixty millions of people, all demand their rescue. The government offers a large reward. Expensive ships are hastily bought and fitted. Skilful officers are summoned. Money to the amount of a million, more or less, is poured out right and left. To adapt the utterance of St. John, the whole land is filled with the welcome odor of the expense.

The rescuers sail away. They fight the ice pack. They defy with their lives berg and floe. They strain muscle and eye, day and night, towards the awful icy North, till at last, here, all but too late; here on this fearful point of ice and rock, the half-dozen emaciated, dying survivors are found, rescued, and borne, carefully tended, swiftly back to be pressed to the eager throbbing heart of the nation.

Does any one ask: "To what purpose was this waste?" In the very city from which these ships of rescue sailed; indeed, almost within a

stone's throw of their docks, were thousands perishing by inches in poverty. Why was not this money spent for them, instead of the six or eight forlorn survivors of the Arctic? The reply of the nation might be: The poor I have with me always: but these few heroes of the North, I have not always. Nay, does not every thoughtful person feel that, in some inscrutable way, this handful of common men stood for the moment as representatives of all; and that what was done for them at such enormous cost was really, after all, done not so much for them alone, or for their physical rescue, as it was done for humanity in loftier and more spiritual directions: that it quickened the popular estimate of the worth of life, that it taught a diviner charity, that it rebuked calculating greed, that it rendered more solid and real the tremendous verities of the spiritual destiny and inheritance of man, and so made more tolerable and hopeful the lot of every poor sufferer throughout the length and breadth of the land? Surely man shall not live by bread alone. Money has a spiritual as well as a material side, and it is the spiritual side that tells.

My illustration is but a feeble one. If the civilized world applauds the expenditure of a million for the rescue of a handful of Arctic explorers, how infinitely more worthy of praise the act of this woman in the honoring of her Lord,—representative and Redeemer of all sorrowing mankind. What millions upon millions, since this beautiful story was written down by the Evangelists, have read it with eager emotion, and thereby been moved to a diviner compassion, to a holier sacrifice.

That along this line lies something of the deep meaning of our Lord, we can see, in the fourth place, in His remaining words, recorded by three of the Evangelists in slightly varied but substantially the same form. St. Matthew's account: "For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial." St. Mark's account: "She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying." St. John's account (Revised Version): "Suffer her to keep it against the day of my burying." How marvellous the insight of this woman! Are we to suppose that she knew at a

distance all the horrible details of betrayal, of desertion, of agony, of death, which were hanging over her Lord; and that she said to herself, Alas! when Thou diest, persecuted, lonely, crucified, none will anoint Thee. I will therefore do it beforehand?

Not this exactly. But with the intuition which belongs to the true woman, she saw that this Divine Man could not long escape the snares of the enemies which were closing around Him. She had a vague feeling that He was already friendless, smitten. She saw afar off the final catastrophe. She wanted to meet its fearful woe by a prophetic honor. She did not reason. But in a great burst of emotion, in which worship, dread, yearning, and unspoken love were mingled, she poured forth in unstinted measure on His adorable Person the costly and hoarded perfume, which was all she had, to do Him honor among His foes. Her noble and spiritually impassioned nature wrought instinctively a noble act; just as the debased, craven, and mercenary soul of Judas, filled with the lust of filthy lucre, hurried swiftly on from his cavil at her, till a few hours afterwards

he had sold his Lord for thirty pieces of silver. From that one table in Bethany flowed the two streams of love and hate. The two characters were there delineated and fixed forever before the world, in the sharpest outline, by their contact with the Son of God. And as though beyond all other incidents in His career, Jesus would give prominence to this; as though above all others he would bestow immortal honor upon its chief actor; as though He would fix its lessons indelibly in the thought of mankind, He uttered respecting this woman and her beautiful deed what He uttered respecting no one else: "Wheresoever the gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."

Here, then, is the point which I would make plain: Was there ever any money so wisely spent as this three hundred pence? Was there ever any money that did so much for the poor as this which Judas said was wasted on the ointment? Was there ever such a blow struck for love against hate; for charity against greed; for the spiritual against the material; for faith in goodness and

in God, against sordid idolatry of mammon and downright atheism, as was struck by this unknown woman, when she broke the alabaster cruse, and poured out the priceless nard upon the head and feet of Jesus?

Of all the people on the face of this earth, the poor have most cause to be thankful that the three hundred pence, which the ointment represented, did not that day fall into the clutches of Judas Iscariot. Those who have constantly to meet life on its hard side; the countless multitudes whose faces are perpetually against the grim wall of poverty; the hard-handed and weary-limbed earners of insufficient wages; the vast throng who know not this morning whence shall come bread for this evening; the thousands who, speechless, are crushed beneath the wheels turned by man's pitiless greed of gain,—they are the people of whom this woman, by her glorious act, is the immortal champion. They are the ones, above all others, who should read this touching story, this little gospel within the gospel, with exultant hearts. For here is a text with which they can meet and confound the thievish, traitorous

Judases of modern civilization, who, with one contrivance or other, are continually striving to sell the poor for a pair of shoes, and then making a great parade of benevolence because they offer to buy them back for a piece of bread.

I am deeply conscious, my friends, that I have given you, in what I have said, only imperfect hints of the wealth of meaning which there is in this story; but if you will allow me, there are two or three thoughts which I would gladly emphasize.

1. The first is that the political economy of Judas Iscariot and his disciples is not commendable. You are well aware that it is a political economy which is popular with a certain large class. But it is neither reasonable nor righteous. It says: sell the ointment; sell service; sell friendship; sell natural scenery; sell the very sunlight if you can; sell all that priceless and beautiful treasure for which this ointment of Bethany stands, and which, by its rich and loving bestowal, makes this otherwise sad life bright with the unseen glory. But if all this should always be put upon the market, it would, by that very fact, soon become value-

less. Soon no one would buy it. And if it were bought, if it were always purchasable, it would become on the one hand the chief instrument of a sinful luxury, and on the other the cause of a deeper pauperism; a means of making wider and more hostile the gap between the rich and the poor. "Sold and given to the poor," indeed! It is the characteristic of the Judas economy that it thinks everything can be sold, even as Judas himself, a little while after he put this famous question, sold himself, body and soul, for thirty pieces of silver. It is the transcendent glory of the gospel economy that it perpetually exalts and insists upon things that cannot be sold; that it freely gives, but will not sell. It is this mighty fact that penetrates and hallows the obscurest corners of human life. It is upon this shining truth that the hope is fixed which will yet deliver both rich and poor from the hell into which, in our day, the Judas economy would plunge them.

2. The most perishable things develop, under certain conditions, the most imperishable quality. What apparently more transitory than this ointment, poured on the head and feet of Jesus

in Bethany so long ago? What more fleeting than its odor? Yet the ointment has remained unwasted to this day; and its deathless fragrance fills the whole breadth of eighteen centuries, and still breathes upon us here, this morning, its sweet, immortal perfume.

There are some things that become imperishable by perishing, that get life by death. "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it," is a law as fixed as the throne of God.

You obtain at large cost a basket of choice flowers to cheer the gloom of a home into which sickness or death has come; to tell the speechless story of your honor and love to some one on whom the world has turned its back; to lay on the newmade grave where earthly hopes are buried. You are glad that the flowers will fade and die, because they, for that very reason, tell with deeper emphasis the story of the fadeless and deathless. Some men of science inform us that we must not believe in the spiritual because we cannot recognize it by the five senses; because it is not verifiable. But may it not be, after all, that it is the material which is the only really unverifiable; that

it gets all the reality and meaning it has from the unseen spirit which, for a time, it enfolds?

3. The story upon which we have meditated this morning, when deeply apprehended, has a gospel fully adequate to guide and sanctify what is known as the æsthetic movement of our times. This profound and widespread revival of the love of beauty, and desire for the things that minister to it, is to-day mightily affecting all classes. It penetrates with its fine fervor the poorest as well as the richest homes. It is reflected back to us in the art treasures of the great cities, and from the eager face of the rudest child.

Like all similar enthusiasms since the world began, it is fraught with extreme peril unless rightly guided. We cannot stop the movement. We would not if we could. We are all influenced by it, and it is resistless as the stars. We cannot meet it by the Judas economy. We cannot meet it by asceticism. That is a worn-out weapon, long since cast aside by sensible people. At the very moment when Jesus was receiving this anointing at Bethany, there was, at decadent Rome and in the corrupt cities of her provinces, a

wild extravagance and debauch of luxury such as we cannot conceive, except as we read the annals of those dark and hopeless years. Yet it is most significant that Jesus, knowing all this, did not offer a syllable of reproof for the lavish profusion of this woman; did not refuse or deny Himself one drop of this ointment; but only pointed out how divine and immortal was its use when linked with Him and His sacrifice. Oh, no. The æsthetic and luxury-loving tendency of our times cannot be met by asceticism; cannot be met by the prohibitory, the monkish spirit. It can be met by the spirit of this woman of the home in Bethany. It can be met by the love of the Cross.

Standing by her side as she breaks the alabaster cruse, and listening to the words of her Lord and ours, spoken so long ago, we say not less, but more of the rich instrumentality which these times of ours give us; only—and here is our sole salvation—only not, not for ourselves, but for Christ and for the poor, with whom in His sacrifice He constantly identifies Himself.

Christianity has but one real temple, the temple of the human soul; it has only one real altar,

the altar of human need. All the wealth of culture, of art, of beauty, and of the things that minister to these, which our times afford, can be hugged selfishly to our bosoms in body and soul destroying luxury. Woe, woe to us and to our land when this shall become the law of our life! On the other hand, it can, if we will, be poured out like the ointment of Bethany, the rich instrument of self-forgetting sacrifice for the honor and service of our blessed Lord, and thus, through Him, it shall realize a spiritual, a divine, an eternal utility for the poorest and most degraded of mankind.

Here, then, my friends, set your substance, set your culture, set your talents, set all the gains of your life, — oh, yes, set your life itself, through the sacrifice of the perishable, in harmony with the imperishable.

THE REVELATION OF CHARACTER AND WORK

THE REVELATION OF CHARACTER AND WORK

II Cor. v: 10. (*First clause, Revised Version.*) *For we must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ*

ONE of the crowning faculties of man is his power to look forward. It is his to live in the future, to draw caution and inspiration from it for the present. It is this which gives to life its seriousness and its joy. What each one of us hopes to be, or fears to be, makes a large part of what each one of us now is. The master spirits of earth have always lived and acted in view of the goal. "We labor," says St. Paul, we perform our daily tasks, we meet our daily temptations, we strive to live in such a manner, "that we may be accepted of Christ, for we must all be manifested," —revealed— "before His judgment seat;"— for such is the meaning of the word translated "appear" in the Authorized Version.

This quality of regulating present conduct by a regard for future consequences is by no means exhibited exclusively in matters of religion. Busi-

ness, politics, science, literature, society, and domestic life have each, in their present management, the vision of returns hoped for or dreaded. In fact, religion being left entirely out of the account, every worthy occupation, enterprise, or department of human life takes to itself dignity just in proportion as it brings the length and largeness of the future down into the brevity and narrowness of the present. The man, whoever he is and whatever he does, who lives simply in the day and for the day, with no outlook beyond, is pronounced contemptible. Religion does indeed immensely stimulate and develop the fore-looking powers of the soul, but it does not create them. Man by nature is more than a child of the present moment.

The objection is sometimes made against the Christian faith that it tends, by its looking forward to a judgment day, and to a state of rewards and punishments, to make characters unreal and selfish. It is alleged that anticipation of recompense in another world for self-denial in this world is debasing, that it is inconsistent with true virtue and fosters self-love. A false Christianity may do this, but not Christianity. The consciousness of

accountability—of a future day of reckoning—belongs to all worthy human endeavor. One might as well say that a regard for future consequences tends to make men false and selfish as artists or engineers, as to say that it makes men false and selfish as Christians.

It is true that the primitive doctrine of Jesus respecting the world to come, under the tremendous inspiration of which the early Christians lived and worked their marvels, has doubtless often been misconceived. There have been many theories in the Church of the judgment day, of heaven and hell, which unquestionably have not tended to promote virtue in those who have held them. But when the judgment day, whether present or future, is seen to be only the revelation of the soul to itself in the light of God which discovers all secrets; and the soul's punishment or reward, whether now or hereafter, is seen to be, not so much any external thing, but the assignment to the soul itself of the moral fruits of its own motives, the hidden contents of its own moral principles and being under the sanction of divine and changeless laws, then it is impossible to

doubt that the belief in accountability to a divine Judge, so far from being degrading, is the most inspiring, exalting, and ennobling idea that can possess the soul. The man, all accidents aside, shall at last be made manifest, and shall be set down and pass for exactly what he is in himself. His character shall be his inheritance and portion, whether of weal or woe. This surely is an idea to set man free from all that is sensual and temporal in the world, and to bind him with patience and enthusiasm to all that is spiritual and eternal.

It is this idea of openness before, and of accountability to, our Lord of which I would put myself and you in fresh possession this morning if I may. And in attempting to do this I do not care to dilate upon this solemn utterance of St. Paul. I do not wish to enter into any theories about Christ's second coming. I have no picture of the judgment day to hold up. I wish simply to present to your faith, as a practical lesson, this old truth, which all branches of the Church have in some way and in all ages held, that the Lord Christ, who is both divine and human in His power and sympathy, is now and is to be the

world's Judge; that He has now and is to have hereafter a judgment seat; that we are being made manifest before that judgment seat to-day, and shall be manifest before it all this year, and must be manifest before it at the end of this world's history.

What, then, may the presence of this thought do for us in our daily life?

1. It may make us more careful about expressing judgments upon our fellow men, either by way of praising or censuring, and more careful about accepting those judgments which the world passes. There is at all times a great temptation to play the part of judge; there are always those who are eager to circulate superficial judgments. But ours is peculiarly a time of criticism, and of criticism often hasty and often quickly and unreasonably developing into flattery or contempt. The ability to say what should be, or should be done, constantly exceeds the ability to be and to do. The newspapers attempt every morning to disclose and pass upon the motives of the world. They immensely enlarge the scope of gossip. They foster the habit of hasty judging. In the midst of this

dust of superfluous and often cruel scrutiny men are confused. The moral sense is weakened. There is bewilderment and demoralization.

Thorough, calm criticism which proceeds upon extensive knowledge of its subject, and with a desire to upbuild upon the best standards, is valuable. It is indispensable to all progress. We have some such criticism. But the shallow, unreasoning character of much of the criticism of the present time is seen in the fact that, with all this freedom in sifting things, the bondage of form, of fashion, of conventional sentence on men and things is still heavy. Genuine criticism was perhaps never more needed and never more difficult. It is a time of change, of doubts and fears and new-born hopes. There is need of caution in judgment. Much old truth, especially in religion, is contained, we may reasonably believe, under new forms. There is some questioning which may be inspired by hate; there is more which is inspired by faith. It will not do for us to say that Christ has no sheep which are not of our fold. The boundaries of the divine kingdom cannot be infallibly traced by any human eye.

On the other hand, it is dangerous for us, in times when worldly success tends to set the standard of spiritual service and character, to declare the divine judgment as to the worth or worthlessness of this or that; to suppose that the church which has the most members, the benevolent society which makes the largest exhibit of receipts and expenditures, the Christian who has the widest fame for work, is the most acceptable to the Lord. It is unsafe for us to attempt to fix the degree of approbation which a man or a work has at the divine bar, with the measuring-rod which the world's society puts into our hands. That society passes its own judgments. Doubtless it has a certain right to pass them. They serve a certain valuable purpose as approximations; but they are not infallible. In general they are crude and delusive, because the world's sharpest judicial process cannot penetrate to motives. Its verdict is not, and cannot be made up from, a vision of men as God sees them. It judges men by their clothes.

In the solemn description of the judgment day which Christ Himself gives, the estimate which

even confessing Christians have made of themselves, and which is obviously not the deduction of laborious self-knowledge under the guidance of the Divine Spirit, but only an echo of the current verdict of the world, — that estimate is seen positively and emphatically reversed. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

That such a complete change of personal estimate of service and character is possible, when men stand in the light of God, should lead us to look cautiously beneath the surface when we are passing sentence or accepting it upon ourselves or others. It should make us fear in giving judgments. It should lead us to these words of St. Paul: "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing against myself: yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord." To realize that

the Lord is judging us, that He is seeing through us, and through the men and the fashions about us, will make us very sober in our praise and blame. It will set us free from irksome responsibility to false ideals. It will make us serene and steady under men's censure, and keep us from being poisoned by their flattery. It will make us wisely sceptical respecting the spiritual substance in this or that religious enterprise, and will save us from worshipping the spirit of evil transformed into an angel of light.

2. A second thing which this consciousness of personal accountability to Christ, in whose sight we must be made manifest, may do for us is to afford us a footing to withstand temptation. Scarcely a week passes but we behold the moral wreck of some one who, with a reputation among the best, only a little while before walked erect and fair in the midst of his fellows. Yet these instances are only the gross and sorry outcome of a subtle seductiveness to evil which surrounds us all, and which makes its crafty appeal to the base human nature that is in us all. The secret of victory over these temptations must be sought in the

culture of the old-fashioned sense of accountability, which reckons upon the beauty and worth of spiritual being, until as we walk in the light of common day, seeing and seen, without thought that it is shining, so we shall have about and within us, to set at naught the darkness of the flesh, the radiance from the presence of the Son of Man.

One need not specify these temptations. Nor is it good to take a despairing tone respecting the age in which we live. Perhaps it would be easy to do so. But men have had to fight in all the ages since Adam substantially the same seductions which we must fight in our time, each one according to his peculiar susceptibilities, powers, and circumstances. The love of money; the love of pleasure; the love of show; the tendency to sell truth and honor for a mess of pottage; the ease of following a multitude to do evil; the inducement to put names for things, to wear the garb of virtue because it is fashionable but to leave the virtue out because it is inconvenient,—these are the old temptations such as are common to man.

Yet our times have their special peril. By the vast increase of material good; by the fullness of comfort and even luxury which has become the habit of most civilized communities; by the comparative cessation of the struggle for liberty which trained the heroic spirit in other ages; by the worship of success which the competition of life has made well-nigh universal,—by all this, these old temptations are greatly intensified for us in many directions. Our material well-being, or our ambition for it, tends to swamp our faith. Our very religion is in danger of becoming earthly and luxurious. The martyr ages of the Church are curiosities, like the armor of the men who moved in them. There is to-day much zeal in respect to religious beliefs; there is no lack of activity in religious enterprise; there is a passion for religious organization; there is apparently often much self-sacrifice; there is lavish benevolence; yet one cannot at times resist the inquiry whether all this zeal and bustling activity are not largely the result of the mere eager spirit of the times, ambitious of publicity, and not inconsistent with base motives, whose baseness is hidden from us beneath

the glow and movement in which we so much delight. The facility with which we break the commandments or tacitly regard them as antiquated statements that need readjustment; the extent to which faith, not in the sense of intellectual assent to dogmas, but in its higher and only worthy sense of practical conformity to righteousness, of willing obedience to moral law as embodied in and interpreted by Jesus, — the extent to which this has dropped out of our religion should make us conscious that we are living in the midst of insidious and dominating temptation.

Whence shall we get the needed power and steadiness to resist? In the daily realization that we must be manifested before Christ's judgment seat. How was it that Moses withstood the seductions of the sensual society of Egypt? "He endured," the record says, "as seeing Him who is invisible." He saw how blessed was whiteness of soul in the presence of Him who alone could know man, and whose approval was alone worth having, and the vision was like a shield to enable him to resist. We need not be ashamed to take to ourselves this old armor of a sense of accounta-

bility as our best defence against the worldliness of our times. You may find the idea smiled at in the magazines you take up to-morrow. That it has fallen into contempt in some influential quarters is one of the saddest proofs that men are away from God. People are trying to put something else in its place. They have been endeavoring to break down the belief in a divine Judge of men, and now they are anxiously seeking for something as a substitute that shall impel men to live decently. What is likely to be their success? Science has discovered many means of illumination. With the electric lamp it proposes to bid defiance to the night. Yet one single beam of the ancient sun has a thousandfold more penetrating and illuminating power than any contrivances man can devise. Indeed, it has what none of them have, the power of imparting life. So to set in clear relief the snares of the Prince of Darkness and to give us life and power to trample them beneath our feet, one ray from the judgment seat of the personal Christ, one flash of this ancient truth of human accountability, one glimpse of that light of life in which the secrets of all hearts shall be

revealed, has more power than millions of the puny candles of this world's maxims or judgments.

3. But the man who sets for himself as his chief object the task of escaping temptations will run great risk of complete failure, and will achieve at best only a negative character. God does not call us so much to the business of fighting the devil, as He does to the work of serving Himself. Indeed, the best weapon against the adversary is positive and enthusiastic service of the Lord. And this is the third thing which this sense of our accountability to Christ as Judge may do for us. It will help us clear away all the rubbish that gathers about the hackneyed phrases, "Christian work," "Christian workers;" enable us to discern the simple, eternal elements of genuine spiritual service, and engage our hearts and hands in it with joyful, patient fervor. We greatly need to reconstruct our conceptions of ministering, and to make them more simple.

I have already hinted at the danger to which we are exposed when Christian activity is somewhat fashionable, of engaging in it from worldly motives, and of having those motives concealed,

even from ourselves, by the goodly show of the activity. It certainly is a very real danger. When every religious enterprise and its results are published, we run great risk of caring far more for what our manifestation shall be in the public prints, than for what it shall be before Christ's judgment seat. We may learn from others; we may emulate their good examples of labor, but the motive and inspiration of all true service must come to the individual and the Church from divine sources. Here we should covet earnestly the best gifts, and be moved by the highest influences. We do not want men to serve God and His cause having in view merely the judgment seat of the religious newspapers. Rather we should urge upon ourselves and others St. Paul's words: "We labor"—we plan and make our efforts in Christian service—"that we may be accepted of Christ, for we must all be made manifest"—ourselves, our work, and all its motives—"before His judgment seat."

Do you perhaps feel that such a thought, that the conception of a standard so infinitely high, must weaken and paralyze all your effort; that

with it you fail utterly? On the contrary, it may give you the greater enthusiasm in serving, and make the life of the disciple, with all its difficulty, a rapture to you. In a noble soul a high standard does not dwarf but enlarges energy and zeal. If you are seriously intent upon excellence, does it discourage you to know that those by whom you must be approved in any contest or exigency of life are men of the exactest knowledge, of exalted purity and rectitude, stern in their judgments, yet of deep sympathy, and with personal interest in your achievement? Surely not. As an English statesman once said, it is not the day of judgment, but the day of no judgment, that we dread. Every chivalrous soul is roused to effort just in proportion to the loftiness of the tribunal before which he is to stand, and by which he is to be judged. He does not want any superficial or temporary judgment. His cry is, "Search me, O God, and know my heart."

When once we think who Christ is, how infinite His knowledge, His purity, His love; when we remember what hosts of once tempted but now redeemed and blessed spirits have their pure af-

fiance in Him; when we conceive what supreme joy it is, after all the shifting standards and fashions, contempts and flatteries, of this fickle world, to be "accepted of Him;" then, if we really love Him, we have a thought, not of discouragement but of inspiration,—an aim that can daily sharpen our insight into what is true Christian service, and gird us for it with patience and exultant zeal.

If we cannot humbly hope that we are really His disciples, that thought of His judgment of us may well fill us with dismay; for whether His or not, we must all alike be made manifest before Him. It may rightfully make us very serious when we recall that reversal of the current judgments respecting Christian service which our Lord Himself announces, and to which I have already referred,—a reversal which puts to shame and banishment from the divine presence those who thought that they had served God in this world, and who doubtless had done so, according to this world's standards. But yet the thought of accountability to Christ, of being made manifest before Him, of being accepted by Him, while it may make us scrutinize our motives and question our hearts

more closely, may also stir us from indolence and formality; may kindle our souls with holy earnestness and set our hands to some unselfish task, to some secret comforting of despairing souls; some friendly warning of wayward feet; some sharing of heavy burdens; some sympathetic testimony to the heavenly realities; some genuine though hidden ministry of love; so that in the day that shall try every man's work of what sort it is, we shall not see all which we dreamed was the fair structure of our lives go down into ashes, but shall find, through the fire, at least one little fragment of imperishable service that shall abide and be "accepted of Him."

4. There is a fourth thing which the daily consciousness of accountability to Christ, before whom we are made manifest, may do for us. It may make us patient, contented, even joyful under trials, whether they proceed from the malice of our fellow men, the fickleness of the world, or the direct hand of our Heavenly Father. Life is often sadly bewildering. It is full of confusing hardships, crosses, and sorrows; and I do not wish to finish this discourse without an attempt to disclose the

comfort which our subject is fitted to give us in these trials.

It has been customary to hold up the day of final accounts as an object of fear to influence ungodly men, and I am very far from saying that it is not a proper use of this mighty theme. Indeed, it is precisely the use which the great Apostle hints that he made of it in the words immediately succeeding my text, where he says, "Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men." I would not abate one jot of that terror with which any reasonable mind, on studying the Scriptures and the secrets and the capacities of the soul, must contemplate the thought of absolutely complete moral disclosure of character, and the corresponding issues of such disclosure, when divinely made and determined.

But the knowledge of opposites is one, and as a complement of its awfulness, I would also remind you that the judgment seat of Christ is a scene where not only the evil of life is to be shown up and condemned, but where also its good is to be brought to light and approved. The right, the true, the pure, shall surely shine and win at last.

This thought can give great encouragement to us in the patient development of character. If much that passes here for genuine upbuilding of the divine kingdom shall hereafter prove to be only chaff; if characters and enterprises which here have received the applause of men shall hereafter receive the condemnation of God; yet on the other hand, what wealth of fairest treasures slowly gathered here in toil and conflict, what graces grown in the desert soil of earth watered with tears, what jewels of manhood and womanhood that here have been polished in the grind and smoke of dreadful days and of obscure places, —what treasures of this sort shall hereafter be unexpectedly revealed to shine imperishable in the heavenly kingdom!

This thought furnishes no excuse for the oppressor. It is not to be flung out as a consolation by those who support the wrongs of society to those who suffer these wrongs. Nothing is more irritating than this. Sometimes impious drafts are thus made upon eternity by those who have no treasure there. Yet the mystery of pain enfolds us all. In spite of the best efforts of the best men,

the world is full of inequalities, cross purposes, mal-adjustment, and suffering. And the poor, the despised, the oppressed, whose lives are wearing away in a cheerless, unlighted round of irksome tasks; and the perplexed of faith, the misunderstood, the broken-hearted, whose eyes have beheld a goal which their fettered feet have failed to reach, —such as these, innumerable in every class and condition, may rightfully stay their fainting souls upon the faith that one day, when Christ shall claim His own, the work of building up and refining character which has gone on in secret within them shall be made manifest in eternal radiance and beauty.

That life is poor which does not in some way have this discipline. It is good to be searched by suffering. It is good to have the soul's spiritual poverty discovered to it. Circumstances may show you that you have great need of fortitude and faith in holding serenely your allegiance to the truth while defending an unpopular cause. You may find need for patience in sorrow, for charity under abuse, for hope under discouragement and failure. Want may crush you; sickness may dis-

able you; friends may desert you; clouds and darkness may settle round you and your dwelling; your burden may seem greater than you can bear; your feet may walk among snares and you may be ready to give up all trust and obedience. If so, look up where your once tempted and suffering Saviour, in the beautiful language of the Apostles' Creed, "sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty," and remember that whatever may seem to be lost now, everything shall yet be gained when, out of the struggles of this transitory life, that character and work shall be made manifest within and without you which shall be "accepted of Him."

LET US NOW PRAISE FAMOUS MEN

A SERMON PREACHED AT HAMPTON VIRGINIA
ON FOUNDER'S DAY FEBRUARY 4 1905

LET US NOW PRAISE FAMOUS MEN

Ecclesiasticus xliv : 1. *Let us now praise famous men*

IT is a rare privilege to be able to address you on this day of happy memories. I am especially glad of the opportunity to add, if I may, even one leaf to the chaplet of laurel that crowns the head of my old friend and college-mate, the founder of Hampton. Not that he needs or desired any eulogy. On the contrary, he particularly disliked, even forbade it; and no one can stand here and not be sensible of his presence and protest. Yet there is a sense in which his eulogy is inevitable. The very stones here are eloquent in his behalf. Moreover, to speak well of him is only the natural reflection in us of his influence over us. This is the meaning of this pertinent exhortation in a very old book: "Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us. The Lord manifested in them great glory, even his mighty power from the beginning."

Such praise, worthily bestowed, is a most helpful exercise for those who sincerely engage in it.

It has been said that the friendship of a great man is a liberal education. Those who were fortunate enough to come in personal contact with General Armstrong here received this impress. But next to such friendship with the great who are living, is the sympathetic admiration, the exalting daily before us as models, of the image, the character, the example of the great who are dead.

They can speak to us with a most penetrating and persuasive voice. What they have been they inspire us to be. Where they have trod they encourage us to follow. Of our sins and failures they convict us. The works that they have wrought, the victories that they have gained, the characters and influence that they have achieved, they, from their silent graves, urge us to make our own. "Let us now praise famous men." We never — especially young people — make a mistake in thus constantly holding before ourselves these shining, uplifting heroes of the past.

In this respect beyond all its other great advantages, Hampton is peculiarly fortunate. Historically and geographically, this is a most admirable situation. Here are noble buildings and excel-

lent apparatus, the cumulating product of many hands, much thought, much sacrifice. But your richest endowment is the personality of your great founder. You do well specially to commemorate his birthday year by year. Here, enshrined in these buildings, yet moving like some persuasive presence through these grounds; standing in your halls, your doorways, your gates, yet also hallowing the very atmosphere with his influence, is the dominating spirit of him of whom all this is the embodiment, and who has quickened, quickens now, and must forever quicken to nobler living every youth that can know Hampton. I can never stand by his lowly grave over yonder without being profoundly moved. "He being dead yet speaketh." Dull indeed must be the ears of that young man, or woman, whom the eloquence of that devoted life does not at once convict of imperfection, and inspire to duty. Yes, though we are aware of his austere protest against all extravagance of speaking, we do well, indeed, to recall with gratitude on this day the memory of Hampton's founder.

It was my great good fortune to know General

Armstrong as a fellow student when he first entered Williams College, more than forty-five years ago. As a college-mate I was familiar with his life and development there. When the flame of the Civil War burst forth, and he entered the army, I followed his career. Later, as he began his service for the Freedman's Bureau, and laid the first foundations of Hampton, his work enlisted my cordial sympathy. Exactly thirty-six years ago this month, I came here at his request to preach and administer the Lord's Supper to the little Church that he had gathered. Then the first of your permanent buildings — Academic Hall — was only partly finished, and the place of meeting was one of the old barracks. As one looks about here now, and contrasts that day with this, one may well exclaim: "What hath God wrought!"

For many years thereafter, during the long course of his strenuous life, he was a frequent guest at my house, often spoke in my church, accompanied me on various excursions, and, with his passionate eagerness, brought me here, talked of his work, and claimed my sympathy and cooperation. Was there ever such a flaming soul?

Was there ever such a many-sided figure: so "rich in saving common-sense," yet so poetic and mystical; so iron-like and inflexible in his purpose, yet so open-minded to all suggestion, and so boyish and frolicsome in his love of fun; so clear-headed and definite in "hugging his fact," as Emerson says, yet so imaginative, prophetic, and far-reaching in his schemes; so ample in his knowledge of the base and seamy side of human nature, yet so abounding in his enthusiasm for humanity; so shrewd in planning and in securing the help of others, yet so trustful and care-free in the confidence that the work would be done?

Hard indeed had been the fate of the African for two hundred and fifty years on this continent. Scarcely less hard had been the fate of the Indian since the white man had touched him. But, though He waits, the Lord knows how to compensate His children. He plans to secure their good in unlooked-for ways. For both oppressed races He took thought, when He caused the little babe, Samuel Chapman Armstrong, to be born on a lone island of the Pacific and trained by marvellous experiences for immortal service here on

this spot. You and all the millions of your brethren have cause for the profoundest gratitude to God for His gift to you and your people of this true hero and saint,—this compelling knight and apostle of your better day, to be forever set like a star in your brightening firmament as your guide, example, and inspiration.

Such a character as that of General Armstrong must be taken as a whole. In one aspect he was a most complex, in another a most simple being. Personality is like life—always in the end a mystery defying analysis. We never quite understand what it is that makes a great man and gives him his preëminent power. His secret is inscrutable. He speaks to us. He sits at our table, chatting and laughing like a child. He plans. For years he labors. He strikes his trenchant blow. Then he passes from us into the land of the hereafter, and we only know that a mighty spirit has been with us. So it was with General Armstrong.

Yet if we suffer ourselves for a moment to inquire into some of the sources of this man's influence over us, and over his own and coming generations, we cannot fail to be impressed first of

all with his missionary spirit,—in other words, the Spirit of Christ that was in him. He was the child of missionary parents and was born on missionary ground. Zeal to help the poor, the ignorant, the darkened, the oppressed, was like a fire in his veins. The impulse to run to their relief was not so much his purpose as it was his life. He delighted in getting at, and giving his hand to, the downmost people. They interested and absorbed him. To him they were peculiarly God's children; and he forgot himself, forgot even his shelter, his food, his clothes, in planning for their aid, in pleading their cause, in enlisting the best forces of society on their behalf. They were as his other self. He bore them and their interests on his heart with unfaltering patience, and wisdom, and devotion.

Yet there was in him not an atom of the morbid sentimentality, the parade of self-sacrifice, the martyr-like, too-good-for-this-world quality which is sometimes popularly associated with the term "missionary." It seemed absurd to apply this title to him. For while he was desperately in earnest, he cherished no illusions about himself,

or his work, or the objects of it. He was always sane. He lived in no fool's paradise. He saw, and often keenly enjoyed, the ludicrous side of the people and the problems with which he had to deal. Yet so absorbed was he in his great enterprise — so much was it his life — that he never thought of it as involving any special hardship on his part; and in those touching memoranda which he left, he said with the utmost simplicity: "I never gave up, or sacrificed anything in my life." Still he was all the while giving his very life for this institution and the people for whom he founded it, and he died a prematurely old man, long before his time, worn out with toil and care.

He had plenty of imagination; he was almost a mystic, yet the hard-headed shrewdness with which he always recognized and stuck to the facts of a situation led him to discern, when no one else thought of it, and, in the face of others' doubts resolutely to provide for, the Freedman's need of being trained to work. Here he had the insight of genius, mingled with the fervor and faith of the missionary.

By work of the hand to educate the head and

the heart; by keeping the feet solidly on the earth and making the hands realize the primal necessity of getting bread for the mouth and decent shelter and clothes for the body; by this very process to rid a man of laziness, vice, mischievous conceits, malice, race jealousies, bitterness, and all the unsocial traits, and to create in him self-respect, a desire for usefulness, and entrance upon the largest opportunity, — how simple it all seems now! But it was far from that in 1865. Then industrial training as an adjunct of education was deemed a failure. The negroes, for the most part, thought that freedom from slavery meant freedom from work. Armstrong saw that work, intelligently directed work, leading to economical, social, and moral progress, was their salvation, as it was also the salvation of the Indian, and, for that matter, of the white man, too, and he stuck to his conviction. He determined to train all the young men and women he could by this means, and then send them forth to their people, to be themselves at once examples and teachers of the same principle. Behold the change wrought in forty years!

Hampton and the Hampton idea have set the pace for the rest of the country. Industrial schools for the negro dot the South, and for the Indian, the West. They are established and maintained by the money of almost every southern state. They have the cordial support of both whites and blacks, who find here a point of union. Tuskegee, the largest and most successful institution managed by negro people for negro people in the world, and Booker Washington, the foremost negro in the world, are children of Hampton, which has thus put its inspiring influence upon every part of the South.

Not only so, but through this revelation of the meaning of work as a factor of education, the southern white people have been led to see the value of industrial education for themselves and their children, and to establish similar institutions in their own behalf. Moreover, the success of the experiment—if experiment it may be called—has been reflected upon educational institutions at the North, bringing them into closer and more helpful contact with the realities of their problem.

When we consider the amazing economical,

social, intellectual, and moral progress which the negro race has made in forty years; when we note the better relations which, in spite of all drawbacks, are slowly but surely coming about between the two races, — the mutual respect, the willingness to coöperate in practical matters, — we cannot doubt that a large part of this great gain is directly due to the influence of the Hampton idea, and we thank God to-day for the keen brain, the fervent heart, the resolute will of the heroic man who on this spot conceived and wrought out this idea.

At the beginning many feared, and perhaps a few may still feel that this gospel of work was intended to keep the negro down, in a class by himself, as a hewer of wood and drawer of water, shut out from opportunity to rise. On the contrary, this gospel has proved for thousands and hundreds of thousands of the colored people, the ready, firm stepping-stone upon which they have been able to lift themselves out of poverty, squalor, ignorance, self-contempt, and the contempt of others, into thrift, decency, industry, intelligence, leadership, and a self-supporting, self-respecting, clean man-

hood and womanhood, able to enter the door of the highest opportunity.

For we must always remember that, while with missionary ardor evolving and putting in operation here and elsewhere this wholesome gospel of work, General Armstrong never neglected for an instant the supreme value of intelligence and character. Indeed, that was his goal. No fiery evangelist, no ordained preacher of righteousness, ever magnified this point more than he. Only, his Scotch-Irish and New England ancestry and his boyhood's experience on missionary ground had taught him the value of the discipline of "doing chores," of hard work, as the vehicle, the method of achieving character. He remembered, too, that when the Almighty created Adam in His own image to live His life, He put "him in a garden to dress and keep it," and Armstrong believed that no man could begin in a better place, or start with a better business.

There is another trait of General Armstrong's of which I should like to speak. Like many men of dominant personality, he had the spirit of a soldier. He himself had a martial figure and loved the pre-

cision of military movements and the sound of the bugle. The Civil War found him a boyish, gay-hearted college student. Under its stern discipline and sacrifice he developed into a man. In it he learned the advantage of thoroughness, obedience, strict organization, and the dutiful subordination of a multitude of parts to one whole.

Many of the noblest qualities of the true soldier are simply the virtues of the true citizen carried to their highest power. The courage; the contempt of ease; the patriotism brought to the practical test of instant readiness to suffer wounds and death; the exaltation of the mass at the unquestioning cost of the individual; the mingled humility respecting one's self and pride in the organization to which one belongs; the patient, steady attention to a thousand details of drudgery in order to meet successfully the great event, the sublime and sudden issue, — all these are a few of the lessons of the genuine soldier. Through these lessons General Armstrong received much of his development. He loved this stern discipline. His soul fervently responded to it. It enlarged, chastened, and exalted some of the finest attri-

butes of the man, and profoundly and helpfully affected his whole later career.

Moreover, his command of a regiment of negro troops enabled him, with that quenchless curiosity and enthusiasm for everything human which was one of his most notable traits, to understand the negro character, and how to get at, and in the best way help, the negro man. He never ceased his fondness for this study. At the close of the war, there was hardly a man at the North who knew the race, its needs and possibilities, more perfectly than he.

I have heard him tell with kindling eye, and not without rollicking humor, how a colonel should be the father of his regiment, and how he had learned to care for, nurse, discipline, inspire, and rally to almost superhuman exertions the individuals and whole body of his men. I remember when I visited him here as early as 1870, watching him with the keenest interest going along the ranks of the students drawn up in military order for inspection. It was a thrilling sight. The spirit of the most serious and chivalrous manhood seemed to breathe from the touch and presence of this knightly Chris-

tian upon these ex-slave boys, to transform them into men. It was education by impression. It was a kind of transference of personality by the mere sight and movement of a great figure. Thus the love of martial music, of martial discipline, and the inspiration, the subtle worth and influence of these things in giving to the slovenly, but slowly rising race, precision, orderliness, rectitude, physical and moral, subordination of the individual and sense of the whole, went out from the soldier Armstrong to Hampton, as one of its earliest, most beneficent, and fixed traditions. From Hampton it went to Tuskegee and to hundreds of similar schools throughout the South. It was the soldier spirit which your great founder brought with him out of the flame of the Civil War, — the spirit of the Christian soldier. It was no wonder that he closed those remarkable memoranda, which are as a household word at Hampton, with the military utterance: "Taps have just sounded," and that in those same memoranda he desired for himself the austere and thrilling simplicity of "a soldier's funeral."

There is another characteristic of General Arm-

strong which should not pass without notice. It is his deep spirituality. So intensely human was he; so devoted to work, and to the practical side of his vast enterprise; so abounding and so unconventional was he in his love of a good joke, and in his disposition to make fun; so absolutely averse was he to talking about any religious experience of his own, that few people realized how profound was his spiritual nature and feeling, and from what depths of daily communion with his God he drew the inspiration which sustained him. He walked with God. Prayer was his vital breath. His heart was always open to the higher suggestions of the Spirit. This is largely the secret of his ability to bear the strain of his work and to influence others to share it. It gave him that air of detachment, of being assured that a Hand stronger and wiser than his own was sustaining him, which was one source of his power. No man was ever more absorbed in his work, yet more outside of and above it.

The lessons of General Armstrong's life have often been emphasized here and elsewhere; yet they need to be impressed year by year upon every

student and every class in this school, upon every generation of your people, and indeed upon all our countrymen. As I have already said, his life and personality are built into the very fabric of this institution. His spirit permeates it. No one can spend any time at Hampton, or come in contact with any one who has ever been a faithful student or teacher here, without in some degree coming under the influence of this extraordinary life, this uplifting personality. Its lessons are in the air, so to speak. Yet perhaps we should not use to the full the opportunity of this Memorial Day, did we not refresh our minds with two or three of the most important of these lessons.

Foremost among them is the assurance we have of the reality of the Divine Providence; "that every man's life is," as Dr. Bushnell said, "a plan of God;" and that we can rest in the wisdom of this Divine Providence, not only in respect to our own lives, but in respect to the institutions, the generations, and the race of which we are a part.

Recall for a moment the oft-told and amazing story. Seventy-five years ago, a strong young

missionary and his bride from New England are on their way to teach the savages of the Sandwich Islands. To human view, what a hopeless enterprise! There, seven years later, their little son, Samuel, is born. The boy grows up to young manhood under the careful eye of father and mother, but living the free, joyous life of the island people in the midst of the most inspiring scenery of mountain and sea. He learns to work. He learns the conditions of the poor savages. He becomes familiar with the school established for their industrial training. He himself, strong, independent, daring, full of passion, tenderness, and trust, is then transferred to Williams College in western Massachusetts — a great change. I well remember his amazement at his first sight of the snow. There he comes under the influence of that prince of teachers, President Mark Hopkins. Eagerly absorbing all the most inspiring advantages of college days, his noble nature expands like a flower. There, at twenty-four, the fiery current of the Civil War finds him. It is primarily on behalf of the slave that he flings himself into that current. The wearisome drudgery of

the camp: the heart-breaking march; the sudden onset; the humiliation of defeat and surrender; the deferring of hope; the exposure; the loneliness; the hunger; the headlong courage at Gettysburg where, as captain, he stands almost alone of the officers of his command, amidst the carnage, — what a discipline, what a tempering of his fine steel is all this! Then, moving up from captain to major and lieutenant-colonel, he at last becomes full colonel of a regiment of ex-slaves. In these he takes the utmost pride. These he trains, watches over, steadies, and leads with passionate ardor and dauntless courage down to the very end of the war and beyond. Then, moved by his unconquerable sympathy for the black people in their ignorance, poverty, and helplessness, we find him on this spot at twenty-seven, at the very top of his splendid manhood, laying with wonderful insight and faith the foundations of this school. What a wonderful story! Can any one trace it, and not believe in God? not believe in an overruling Providence?

But the tremendous lesson for each one of us is that every one of our lives, however insignificant

it may seem, is intended in like manner to reveal God's Providence, and is just as much under His care. Not on the same scale. General Armstrong was right when he said: "Few men have had the chance that I have had." Not on the same scale, but with equal reality. Be sure that God has a place for you and your race. Not without a purpose did He cause you to be born and brought up, hindered here and helped there, as you have been so far. Though your life may thus far have seemed to be very petty and wretched, mean and narrow in its outlook, full of poverty, darkness, limitations, yet know this, that God is in it. Even its hardships and obstacles are ordered by His hand. Be sure that if you trust Him, He has a place for you, a work, an influence; not so great, not so glorious, it may be, as General Armstrong's, but not the less beautiful, not the less God's plan.

"*Lives of great men all remind us,*
We may make our lives sublime."

You may sometimes think, perhaps some of you may be thinking to-day, "I am shut up by poverty or lack of friends, and there is no way out for me. I am at the end of my rope. I have nothing,

and can do and be nothing forevermore. Amen." But God is near you, nevertheless, and is planning for you at just such times. *Only*, — and this is the second supreme lesson for us all from General Armstrong's life, — *only*, God never helps those who do not help themselves. He expects every one of us to do his utmost duty at every step; to be ready, even in the darkest hour, to do the very next honest thing, be it never so little, so hard, so menial. The lazy man, the man who, because life looks at the moment a little dark, or burdened, or trying, or because the immediate thing that he is asked to do seems beneath his dignity, — this sort of man Nature herself will spue out of her mouth at last as a worthless, nauseating thing, and he will find himself in the rubbish-heap, forsaken of gods and men. Nobody wants him.

We look back to-day over General Armstrong's marvellous career, and it seems as straight and clear, as beautiful and radiant, from beginning to end, as a ray of sunlight coming forth from the very bosom of God, but there were many hard places, and difficult, perplexing crises in that life.

In college he struggled over the question whether or no he should enter the ministry. After the war, he was for a time out of employment, and hesitated whether he should study a profession, go into business, seek a government position, or try to enter Congress. He had his hours of anxiety. But at each one of these crises, as well as the crises in the history of this school, when the way seemed dark or hedged in, he resolutely and with faith did the duty that lay next his hand, and duty pointed the shining way; duty revealed the divine plan. The action of the man was the revelation of God.

This seems to me one of the deepest lessons of General Armstrong's life for you. He himself was never tired of enforcing it: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." If it is blacking boots, black them so cheerfully and so well that they shall prove your capacity for greater tasks. The divine pathway to the largest things opens from the smallest ones.

Your great founder was himself a most conspicuous illustration of this simple principle. Let all complaining, despondent, stagnating souls take heart from his example.

Here I must leave this fascinating theme. But let me say to you, young men and women, how great your opportunities are here. There is no place quite like this. Here you are the select beneficiaries of a great tradition, of a most inspiring life. Fail not to do your utmost. I feel here still the uplifting throb of the knightly, duty-loving, heroic presence of my old and beloved friend — lover of God, lover of you. His flashing eye seems still on you. His impetuous voice seems still ringing in our ears. Be worthy of all that he has done for you. Be equal to his great expectation for you.